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MINSTRELSY OF THE SCOTTISH BORDER

VOLUME IV

SIR WALTER SCOTT'S

MINSTRELSY

OF

THE SCOTTISH BORDER

EDITED BY

T. F. HENDERSON

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MINSTRELSY

OF THE

SCOTTISH BORDER

CONSISTING OF

HISTORICAL AND ROMANTIC BALLADS

COLLECTED

IN THE SOUTHERN COUNTIES OF SCOTLAND;

WITH A FEW OF MODERN DATE, FOUNDED

UPON LOCAL TRADITION

The songs, to savage virtue dear,
That won of yore the public ear,
Ere polity, sedate and sage,
Had quench'd the fires of feudal rage.

WARTON.

ESSAY

ON

IMITATIONS OF THE ANCIENT BALLAD[1]

The invention of printing necessarily occasioned the downfall of the Order of Minstrels, already reduced to contempt by their own bad habits, by the disrepute attached to their profession, and by the laws calculated to repress their licence. When the Metrical Romances were very many of them in the hands of every one, the occupation of those who made their living by reciting them was in some degree abolished, and the minstrels either disappeared altogether, or sunk into mere musicians, whose utmost acquaintance with poetry was being able to sing a ballad. Perhaps old Anthony, who acquired, from the song which he accounted his masterpiece, the name of *Anthony Now Now,* was one of the last of this class in the capital; nor does the tenor of his poetry evince whether it was his own composition, or that of some other.[2]

[1] [This essay was written in April 1830, and forms a continuation of the 'Remarks on Popular Poetry,' printed in the first volume of the present series.—J. G. L.]

[2] He might be supposed a contemporary of Henry VIII., if the greeting which he pretends to have given to that monarch is of his own composition, and spoken in his own person.

> '"Good morrow to our noble king," quoth I;
> "Good morrow," quoth he to thou:
> And then he said to Anthony,
> "O Anthony, now, now, now."'

But the taste for popular poetry did not decay with the class of men by whom it had been for some generations practised and preserved. Not only did the simple old ballads retain their ground, though circulated by the new art of printing, instead of being preserved by recitation; but in the *Garlands*, and similar collections for general sale, the authors aimed at a more ornamental and regular style of poetry than had been attempted by the old minstrels, whose composition, if not extemporaneous, was seldom committed to writing, and was not, therefore, susceptible of accurate revision. This was the more necessary, as even the popular poetry was now feeling the effects arising from the advance of knowledge, and the revival of the study of the learned languages, with all the elegance and refinement which it induced.

In short, the general progress of the country led to an improvement in the department of popular poetry, tending both to soften and melodise the language employed, and to ornament the diction beyond that of the rude minstrels, to whom such topics of composition had been originally abandoned. The monotony of the ancient recitals was, for the same causes, altered and improved upon. The eternal descriptions of battles, and of love dilemmas, which, to satiety, filled the old romances with trivial repetition, were retrenched. If any one wishes to compare the two eras of lyrical poetry, a few verses taken from one of the latest minstrel ballads, and one of the earliest that were written for the press, will afford him, in some degree, the power of doing so. The rude lines from Anthony Now Now, which we have just quoted, may, for example, be compared,

as Ritson requests, with the ornamented commencement of the ballad of 'Fair Rosamond':—

'When as King Henry ruled this land
The second of the name,
Besides his queen he dearly loved
A fair and stately dame.

'Most peerless was her beauty found,
Her favour, and her face,
A sweeter creature in the world
Did never king embrace.

'Her crispèd locks, like threads of gold,
Appeared to each man's sight;
Her sparkling eyes, like orient pearls,
Did cast a heavenly light.

'The blood within her crystal cheeks
Did such a colour drive,
As if the lily and the rose
For mastery did strive.'

It may be rash to affirm, that those who lived by singing this more refined poetry, were a class of men different from the ancient minstrels; but it appears, that both the name of the professors, and the character of the Minstrel poetry, had sunk in reputation.[1]

The facility of versification, and of poetical diction, is decidedly in favour of the moderns, as might reasonably be expected from the improved taste, and enlarged knowledge, of an age which abounded to such a degree in poetry, and of a character so imaginative as was the Elizabethan era. The poetry addressed to the populace, and enjoyed by them alone, was animated by the spirit that was breathed

[1] ['Fair Rosamond' (*c.* 1592-3), of which there are black-letter copies in the Roxburghe, Pepys, and Wood Collections, was written by Thomas Delone.]

around. We may cite Shakespeare's unquestionable and decisive evidence in this respect. In *Twelfth Night* he describes a popular ballad, with a beauty and precision which no one but himself could have affixed to its character; and the whole constitutes the strongest appeal in favour of that species of poetry which is written to suit the taste of the public in general, and is most naturally preserved by oral tradition. But the remarkable part of the circumstance is, that when the song is actually sung by Festé the clown, it differs in almost all particulars from what we might have been justified in considering as attributes of a popular ballad of that early period. It is simple, doubtless, both in structure and phraseology, but is rather a love-song than a minstrel ballad—a love-song, also, which, though its imaginative figures of speech are of a very simple and intelligible character, may nevertheless be compared to anything rather than the boldness of the preceding age, and resembles nothing less than the ordinary minstrel ballad. The original, though so well known, may be here quoted, for the purpose of showing, what was, in Shakespeare's time, regarded as the poetry of 'the old age.' Almost every one has the passage by heart, yet I must quote it, because there seems a marked difference between the species of poem which is described, and that which is sung:—

> 'Mark it, Cæsario; it is old and plain:
> The spinsters and the knitters in the sun,
> And the free maids, that weave their thread with bones,
> Do use to chant it; it is silly sooth,
> And dallies with the innocence of love,
> Like the old age.'

The song, thus beautifully prefaced, is as follows:—

'Come away, come away, death,
And in sad cypress let me be laid,
Fly away, fly away, breath;
I am slain by a fair cruel maid.
My shroud of white, stuck all with yew,
O, prepare it!
My part of death, no one so true
Did share it.

'Not a flower, not a flower sweet,
On my black coffin let there be strown;
Not a friend, not a friend greet
My poor corpse, where my bones shall be thrown:
A thousand, thousand sighs to save,
Lay me, O where
Sad true lover never find my grave
To weep there!'

On comparing this love-elegy, or whatever it may be entitled, with the ordinary, and especially the earlier popular poetry, I cannot help thinking that a great difference will be observed in the structure of the verse, the character of the sentiments, the ornaments and refinement of the language. Neither, indeed, as might be expected, from the progress of human affairs, was the change in the popular style of poetry achieved without some disadvantages, which counterbalanced, in a certain degree, the superior art and exercise of fancy which had been introduced of late times.

The expressions of Sir Philip Sidney, an unquestionable judge of poetry, flourishing in Elizabeth's golden reign, and drawing around him, like a magnet, the most distinguished poets of the age, amongst whom we need only name Shakespeare and Spenser, still show something to regret when he compared the highly wrought and richly ornamented

poetry of his own time with the ruder but more energetic diction of 'Chevy Chase.' His words, often quoted, cannot yet be dispensed with on the present occasion. They are a chapter in the history of ancient poetry. 'Certainly,' says the brave knight, 'I must confess my own barbarousness; I never heard the old song of Percy and Douglas, that I found not my heart more moved than with a trumpet. And yet it is sung by some blind crowder, with no rougher voice than rude style, which being so evil apparelled in the dust and cobwebs of that uncivil age, what would it work, trimmed in the gorgeous eloquence of Pindar?'[1]

If we inquire more particularly what were the peculiar charms by which the old minstrel ballad produced an effect like a trumpet-sound upon the bosom of a real son of chivalry, we may not be wrong in ascribing it to the extreme simplicity with which the narrative moves forward, neglecting all the more minute ornaments of speech and diction, to the grand object of enforcing on the hearer a striking and affecting catastrophe. The author seems too serious in his wish to affect the audience, to allow himself to be drawn aside by anything which can, either by its tenor, or the manner in which it is spoken, have the perverse effect of distracting attention from the catastrophe.

Such grand and serious beauties, however, occurred but rarely to the old minstrels; and, in order to find them, it became necessary to struggle through long passages of monotony, languor, and inanity. Unfortunately it also happened, that those who, like Sidney, could ascertain, feel, and do full justice to the beauties of the heroic ballad, were few,

[1] Sir Philip Sidney's Defence of Poesy.

compared to the numbers who could be sensible of the trite *verbiage* of a bald passage, or the ludicrous effect of an absurd rhyme. In England, accordingly, the popular ballad fell into contempt during the seventeenth century; and although in remote counties [1] its inspiration was occasionally the source of a few verses, it seems to have become almost entirely obsolete in the capital. Even the Civil Wars, which gave so much occasion for poetry, produced rather song and satire, than the ballad or popular epic. The curious reader may satisfy himself on this point, should he wish to ascertain the truth of the allegation, by looking through D'Urfey's large and curious collection,[2] when he will be aware that the few ballads which it contains are the most ancient productions in the book, and very seldom take their date after the commencement of the seventeenth century.

In Scotland, on the contrary, the old minstrel ballad long continued to preserve its popularity. Even the last contests of Jacobitism were recited with great vigour in ballads of the time, the authors of some of which are known and remembered; nor is there a more spirited ballad preserved than that of Mr. Skirving [3] (father of Skirving the artist),

[1] A curious and spirited specimen occurs in Cornwall, as late as the trial of the Bishops before the Revolution. The President of the Royal Society of London [Mr. Davies Gilbert] has not disdained the trouble of preserving it from oblivion. [*Christmas Carols*, 1826.]

[2] [*Pills to Purge Melancholy.*—J. G. L.] [It first appeared in 1684; reissue, enlarged, 5 vols., 1699-1714; and a final ed., 6 vols., 1719-1720.]

[3] [See Hogg's *Jacobite Relics*, vol. i.—J. G. L.] [This ballad, modelled on older ones on Killiecrankie, etc., appeared as a broadside, and is included in Herd's *Songs*, 1776, vol. i. 109-12.]

upon the battle of Prestonpans, so late as 1745. But this was owing to circumstances connected with the habits of the people in a remote and rude country, which could not exist in the richer and wealthier provinces of England.

On the whole, however, the ancient Heroic ballad, as it was called, seemed to be fast declining among the more enlightened and literary part of both countries; and if retained by the lower classes in Scotland, it had in England ceased to exist, or degenerated into doggerel of the last degree of vileness.

Subjects the most interesting were abandoned to the poorest rhymers, and one would have thought that, as in an ass-race, the prize had been destined to the slowest of those who competed for the prize. The melancholy fate of Miss Ray,[1] who fell by the hands of a frantic lover, could only inspire the Grub Street muse with such verses as these—that is, if I remember them correctly:—

'A Sandwich favourite was this fair,
And her he dearly loved;
By whom six children had, we hear;
This story fatal proved.

'A clergyman, O wicked one,
In Covent Garden shot her;
No time to cry upon her God,
It's hoped He's not forgot her.'

If it be true, as in other cases, that when things are at the worst, they must mend, it was certainly

[1] [Miss Ray, the beautiful mistress of the Earl of Sandwich, then First Lord of the Admiralty, was assassinated by Mr. Hackman, 'in a fit of frantic jealous love,' as Boswell expresses it, in 1779. See Croker's *Boswell*, vol. iv. p. 254. J. G. L.] [Miss Ray was the mother of Basil Montagu, the friend of Carlyle.]

time to expect an amelioration in the department in which such doggerel passed current.

Accordingly, previous to this time, a new species of poetry seems to have arisen, which in some cases endeavoured to pass itself as the production of genuine antiquity and in others, honestly avowed an attempt to emulate the merits and avoid the errors with which the old ballad was encumbered; and in the effort to accomplish this, a species of composition was discovered, which is capable of being subjected to peculiar rules of criticism, and of exhibiting excellences of its own.

In writing for the use of the general reader, rather than the poetical antiquary, I shall be readily excused from entering into any inquiry respecting the authors who first showed the way in this peculiar department of modern poetry, which I may term the imitation of the old ballad, especially that of the latter or Elizabethan era. One of the oldest, according to my recollection, which pretends to engraft modern refinement upon ancient simplicity, is extremely beautiful, both from the words and the simple and affecting melody to which they are usually sung. The title is 'Lord Henry and Fair Catherine.' It begins thus:—

'In ancient days, in Britain's isle,
Lord Henry well was known;
No knight in all the land more famed,
Or more deserved renown.

'His thoughts were all on honour bent,
He ne'er would stoop to love:
No lady in the land had power
His frozen heart to move.'

Early in the eighteenth century, this peculiar

species of composition became popular. We find Tickell, the friend of Addison, who produced the beautiful ballad 'Of Leinster famed for Maidens fair.' Mallet, Goldsmith, Shenstone, Percy, and many others, followed an example which had much to recommend it, especially as it presented considerable facilities to those who wished, at as little exertion of trouble as possible, to attain for themselves a certain degree of literary reputation.

Before, however, treating of the professed imitators of Ancient Ballad Poetry, I ought to say a word upon those who have written their imitations with the preconceived purpose of passing them for ancient.

There is no small degree of cant in the violent invectives with which impostors of this nature have been assailed. In fact, the case of each is special, and ought to be separately considered, according to its own circumstances. If a young, perhaps a female, author chooses to circulate a beautiful poem—we will suppose that of Hardyknute—under the disguise of antiquity, the public is surely more enriched by the contribution than injured by the deception.[1] It is hardly possible, indeed, without the power of poetical genius, and acquaintance with ancient language and manners possessed by very few, to succeed in deceiving those who have made this branch of literature their study. The very desire to unite modern refinement with the *verve* of the ancient minstrels, will itself betray the masquerade. A minute acquaintance with ancient customs, and with ancient history, is also demanded,

[1] ['Hardyknute was the first poem that I ever learnt—the last that I shall forget.'—Ms. note of Sir Walter Scott on a leaf of Allan Ramsay's *Tea-Table Miscellany*.—J. G. L.]

to sustain a part which, as it must rest on deception, cannot be altogether an honourable one.

Two of the most distinguished authors of this class have, in this manner, been detected; being deficient in the knowledge requisite to support their genius in the disguise they meditated. Hardyknute, for instance, already mentioned, is irreconcilable with all chronology, and a chief with a Norwegian name is strangely introduced as the first of the nobles brought to resist a Norse invasion, at the battle of Largs: the 'needlework so rare,' introduced by the fair authoress, must have been certainly long posterior to the reign of Alexander III. In Chatterton's ballad of 'Sir Charles Baudwin,' we find an anxious attempt to represent the composition as ancient, and some entries in the public accounts of Bristol were appealed to in corroboration. But neither was this ingenious, but most unhappy young man, with all his powers of poetry, and with the antiquarian knowledge which he had collected with indiscriminating but astonishing research, able to impose on that part of the public qualified to judge of the compositions, which it had occurred to him to pass off as those of a monk of the fourteenth century. It was in vain that he in each word doubled the consonants, like the sentinels of an endangered army. The art used to disguise and misspell the words only overdid what was intended, and afforded sure evidence that the poems published as antiques had been, in fact, tampered with by a modern artist, as the newly forged medals of modern days stand convicted of imposture from the very touches of the file, by which there is an attempt to imitate the cracks

and fissures produced by the hammer upon the original.[1]

I have only met, in my researches into those matters, with one poem, which, if it had been produced as ancient, could not have been detected on internal evidence. It is the 'War Song upon the Victory at Brunnanburg, translated from the Anglo-Saxon into Anglo-Norman,' by the Right Honourable John Hookham Frere. See Ellis's *Specimens of Ancient English Poetry*, vol. i. p. 32. The accomplished editor tells us, that this very singular poem was intended as an imitation of the style and language of the fourteenth century, and was written during the controversy occasioned by the poems attributed to Rowley. Mr. Ellis adds,

[1] This failure applies to the repairs and rifacimentos of old ballads, as well as to complete imitations. In the beautiful and simple ballad of 'Gil Morris,' some affected person has stuck in one or two factitious verses, which, like vulgar persons in a drawing-room, betray themselves by their over-finery. Thus, after the simple and affecting verse which prepares the readers for the coming tragedy—

'Gil Morrice sat in good green wood,
He whistled and he sang;
O what mean a' yon folk coming,
My mother tarries lang?

some such 'vicious intromitter' as we have described (to use a barbarous phrase for a barbarous proceeding) has inserted the following quintessence of affectation:—

'His locks were like the threads of gold,
Drawn from Minerva's loom;
His lips like roses drapping dew,
His breath was a' perfume.

'His brow was like the mountain snow,
Gilt by the morning beam;
His cheeks like living roses blow,
His een like azure stream.

'The boy was clad in robes of green,
Sweet as the infant spring;
And like the mavis on the bush,
He gart the valleys ring.'

'the reader will probably hear with some surprise, that this singular instance of critical ingenuity was the composition of an Eton schoolboy.'

The author may be permitted to speak as an artist on this occasion (disowning, at the same time, all purpose of imposition), as having written, at the request of the late Mr. Ritson, one or two things of this kind—among others, a continuation of the Romance of Thomas of Ercildoune, the only one which chances to be preserved, and which the reader will find in a subsequent volume.[1] And he thinks himself entitled to state, that a modern poet engaged in such a task, is much in the situation of an architect of the present day, who, if acquainted with his profession, finds no difficulty in copying the external forms of a Gothic castle or abbey; but when it is completed, can hardly, by any artificial tints or cement, supply the spots, weather-stains, and hues of different kinds, with which time alone had invested the venerable fabric which he desires to imitate.

Leaving this branch of the subject, in which the difficulty of passing off what is modern for what is ancient cannot be matter of regret, we may bestow with advantage some brief consideration on the fair trade of manufacturing modern antiques; not for the purpose of passing them as contraband goods on the skilful antiquary, but in order to obtain the credit due to authors as successful imitators of the ancient simplicity, while their system admits of a considerable infusion of modern refinement. Two classes of imitation may be referred to as belonging to this species of composition. When they approach each other, there

[1] [See *post*, 'Thomas the Rhymer,' Parts Second and Third.]

may be some difficulty in assigning to individual poems their peculiar character, but in general, the difference is distinctly marked. The distinction lies betwixt the authors of ballads or legendary poems, who have attempted to imitate the language, the manners, and the sentiments of the ancient poems which were their prototypes; and those, on the contrary, who, without endeavouring to do so, have struck out a particular path for themselves, which cannot with strict propriety be termed either ancient or modern.

In the actual imitation of the ancient ballad, Dr. Percy, whose researches made him well acquainted with that department of poetry, was peculiarly successful. The 'Hermit of Warkworth,' the 'Child of Elle,' and other minstrel tales of his composition, must always be remembered with fondness by those who have perused them in that period of life when the feelings are strong, and the taste for poetry, especially of this simple nature, is keen and poignant. This learned and amiable prelate was also remarkable for his power of restoring the ancient ballad, by throwing in touches of poetry, so adapted to its tone and tenor, as to assimilate with its original structure, and impress every one who considered the subject as being coeval with the rest of the piece. It must be owned that such freedoms, when assumed by a professed antiquary, addressing himself to antiquaries, and for the sake of illustrating literary antiquities, are subject to great and licentious abuse; and herein the severity of Ritson was to a certain extent justified. But when the licence is avowed, and practised without the intention to deceive, it cannot be objected to but by scrupulous pedantry.

The poet, perhaps, most capable, by verses, lines, even single words, to relieve and heighten the character of ancient poetry, was the Scottish bard Robert Burns. We are not here speaking of the avowed lyrical poems of his own composition, which he communicated to Mr. George Thomson, but of the manner in which he recomposed and repaired the old songs and fragments, for the collection of Johnson and others, when, if his memory supplied the theme, or general subject of the song, such as it existed in Scottish lore, his genius contributed that part which was to give life and immortality to the whole. If this praise should be thought extravagant, the reader may compare his splendid lyric, 'My Heart's in the Highlands,' with the tame and scarcely half-intelligible remains of that song as preserved by Peter Buchan.[1] Or, what is perhaps a still more magnificent example of what we mean: 'Macpherson's Farewell,' with all its spirit and grandeur, as repaired by Burns, may be collated with the original poem called 'Macpherson's Lament,' or sometimes the 'Ruffian's Rant.' In Burns's brilliant rifacimento, the same strain of wild ideas is expressed as we find in the original; but with an infusion of the savage and impassioned spirit of Highland chivalry, which gives a splendour to the composition, of which we find not a trace in the rudeness of the ancient ditty. I can bear witness to the older verses having been current while I was a child, but I never knew a line of the inspired

[1] [Peter Buchan's version was probably mainly the work of his modern 'wight of Homer's craft,' so that in this case the comparison would be between Burns and the 'wight.' Burns's version was, he states, his own, all except the first half-stanza.]

edition of the Ayrshire bard until the appearance of Johnson's *Museum*.

Besides Percy, Burns, and others, we must not omit to mention Mr. Finlay, whose beautiful song,

'There came a knight from the field of the slain,'

is so happily descriptive of antique manners; or Mickle, whose accurate and interesting imitations of the ancient ballad we have already mentioned with approbation in the former Essay on Ballad Composition. These, with others of modern date, at the head of whom we must place Thomas Moore, have aimed at striking the ancient harp with the same bold and rough note to which it was awakened by the ancient minstrels. Southey, Wordsworth, and other distinguished names of the present century, have, in repeated instances, dignified this branch of literature; but no one more than Coleridge, in the wild and imaginative tale of the 'Ancient Mariner,' which displays so much beauty with such eccentricity. We should act most unjustly in this department of Scottish ballad poetry, not to mention the names of Leyden, Hogg, and Allan Cunningham. They have all three honoured their country, by arriving at distinction from a humble origin, and there is none of them under whose hand the ancient Scottish harp has not sounded a bold and distinguished tone. Miss Anne Bannerman likewise should not be forgotten, whose *Tales of Superstition and Chivalry* appeared about 1802. They were perhaps too mystical and too abrupt; yet if it be the purpose of this kind of ballad poetry powerfully to excite the imagination, without pretending to satisfy it, few persons have succeeded better than this gifted lady, whose volume

is peculiarly fit to be read in a lonely house by a decaying lamp.

As we have already hinted, a numerous class of the authors (some of them of the very first class) who condescended to imitate the simplicity of ancient poetry, gave themselves no trouble to observe the costume, style, or manner, either of the old minstrel or ballad-singer, but assumed a structure of a separate and peculiar kind, which could not be properly termed either ancient or modern, although made the vehicle of beauties which were common to both. The discrepancy between the mark which they avowed their purpose of shooting at, and that at which they really took aim, is best illustrated by a production of one of the most distinguished of their number. Goldsmith describes the young family of his Vicar of Wakefield, as amusing themselves with conversing about poetry. Mr. Burchell observes that the British poets, who imitated the classics, have especially contributed to introduce a false taste, by loading their lines with epithets, so as to present a combination of luxuriant images, without plot or connection—a string of epithets that improve the sound, without carrying on the sense. But when an example of popular poetry is produced as free from the fault which the critic has just censured, it is the well-known and beautiful poem of 'Edwin and Agelina!' which, in felicitous attention to the language, and in fanciful ornament of imagery, is as unlike to a minstrel ballad, as a lady assuming the dress of a Shepherdess for a masquerade, is different from the actual Sisly of Salisbury Plain. Tickell's beautiful ballad is equally formed upon a pastoral, sentimental, and ideal model, not, however, less beautifully executed; and the attention of

Addison's friend had been probably directed to the ballad stanza (for the stanza is all which is imitated), by the praise bestowed on 'Chevy Chase' in the *Spectator*.

Upon a later occasion, the subject of Mallet's fine poem, 'Edwin and Emma,' being absolutely rural in itself, and occurring at the hamlet of Bowes, in Yorkshire, might have seduced the poet from the *beau-idéal* which he had pictured to himself, into something more immediately allied to common life. But Mallet was not a man to neglect what was esteemed fashionable, and poor Hannah Railton and her lover Wrightson were enveloped in the elegant frippery appertaining to 'Edwin and Emma'; for the similes, reflections, and suggestions of the poet are, in fact, too intrusive and too well said to suffer the reader to feel the full taste of the tragic tale. The verses are doubtless beautiful, but, I must own, the simple prose of the Curate's letter, who gives the narrative of the tale as it really happened, has to me a tone of serious veracity more affecting than the ornaments of Mallet's fiction. The same author's ballad, 'William and Margaret,' has, in some degree, the same fault. A disembodied spirit is not a person before whom the living spectator takes leisure to make remarks of a moral kind; as—

> 'So will the fairest face appear,
> When youth and years are flown,
> And such the robe that Kings must wear,
> When death has reft their crown.'

Upon the whole, the ballad, though the best of Mallet's writing, is certainly inferior to its original, which I presume to be the very fine and even terrific old Scottish tale, beginning—

> 'There came a ghost to Margaret's door.'

It may be found in Allan Ramsay's *Tea-Table Miscellany.*[1]

We need only stop to mention another very beautiful piece of this fanciful kind, by Dr. Cartwright, called 'Armin and Elvira,' containing some excellent poetry, expressed with unusual felicity. I have a vision of having met this accomplished gentleman in my very early youth, and am the less likely to be mistaken, as he was the first living poet I recollect to have seen.[2] His poem had the distinguished honour to be much admired by our celebrated philosopher, Dugald Stewart, who was wont to quote, with much pathos, the picture of resignation in the following stanza:—

> 'And while his eye to heaven he raised,
> Its silent waters stole away.'[3]

After enumerating so many persons of undoubted genius, who have cultivated the Arcadian style of poetry (for to such it may be compared), it would be endless to enumerate the various Sir Eldreds of the hills and downs whose stories were woven into *legendary tales*—which came at length to be the name assigned to this half-ancient, half-modern style of composition.

In general, I may observe, that the supposed facility of this species of composition, the alluring

[1] [Mallet's ballad is now known to be a slight alteration of another vamp, of which there is a copy with music in the British Museum.]

[2] If I am right in what must be a very early recollection, I saw Mr. Cartwright (then a student of medicine at the Edinburgh University) at the house of my maternal grandfather, John Rutherford, M.D.

[3] Happily altered by an admiring foreigner, who read:—

> '*The* silent waters stole away.'

simplicity of which was held sufficient to support it, afforded great attractions for those whose ambition led them to exercise their untried talents in verse, but who were desirous to do so with the least possible expense of thought. The task seems to present, at least to the inexperienced acolyte of the Muses, the same advantages which an instrument of sweet sound and small compass offers to those who begin their studies in music. In either case, however, it frequently happens that the scholar, getting tired of the palling and monotonous character of the poetry or music which he produces, becomes desirous to strike a more independent note, even at the risk of its being a more difficult one.

The same simplicity involves an inconvenience fatal to the continued popularity of any species of poetry, by exposing it in a peculiar degree to ridicule and to parody. Dr. Johnson, whose style of poetry was of a very different and more stately description, could ridicule the ballads of Percy, in such stanzas as these :—

> 'The tender infant, meek and mild,
> Fell down upon a stone ;
> The nurse took up the squalling child,
> But still the child squall'd on' ;

with various slipshod imitations of the same quality.[1] It did not require his talents to pursue this vein of raillery, for it was such as most men could imitate, and all could enjoy. It is, therefore, little wonderful that this sort of composition should be repeatedly

[1] [Percy was specially annoyed, according to Boswell, with

> 'I put my hat upon my head,
> And walked into the Strand,
> And there I met another man,
> With his hat in his hand.'—J. G. L.]

laid aside for considerable periods of time, and certainly as little so, that it should have been repeatedly revived, like some forgotten melody, and have again obtained some degree of popularity, until it sunk once more under satire, as well as parody, but, above all, the effects of satiety.

During the thirty years that I have paid some attention to literary matters, the taste for the ancient ballad melody, and for the closer or more distant imitation of that strain of poetry, has more than once arisen, and more than once subsided, in consequence, perhaps, of too unlimited indulgence. That this has been the case in other countries, we know; for the Spanish poet, when he found that the beautiful Morisco romances were excluding all other topics, confers upon them a hearty malediction.[1]

A period when this particular taste for the popular ballad was in the most extravagant degree of fashion, became the occasion, unexpectedly, indeed, of my deserting the profession to which I was educated, and in which I had sufficiently advantageous prospects for a person of limited ambition. I have, in a former publication, undertaken to mention this circumstance; and I will endeavour to do so with becoming brevity, and without more egotism than is positively exacted by the nature of the story.

I may, in the first place, remark that although the assertion has been made, and that by persons who seemed satisfied with their authority, it is a mistake to suppose that my situation in life or place in society were materially altered by such success as I attained in literary attempts. My birth, with-

[1] See the Introduction to Lockhart's *Spanish Ballads*, 1823, p. xxii.

out giving the least pretension to distinction, was that of a gentleman, and connected me with several respectable families and accomplished persons. My education had been a good one, although I was deprived of its full benefit by indifferent health, just at the period when I ought to have been most sedulous in improving it. The young men with whom I was brought up, and lived most familiarly, were those, who, from opportunities, birth, and talents, might be expected to make the greatest advances in the career for which we were all destined; and I have the pleasure still to preserve my youthful intimacy with no inconsiderable number of them, whom their merit has carried forward to the highest honours of their profession. Neither was I in a situation to be embarrassed by the *res angusta domi*, which might have otherwise brought painful additional obstructions to a path in which progress is proverbially slow. I enjoyed a moderate degree of business for my standing, and the friendship of more than one person of consideration and influence efficiently disposed to aid my views in life. The private fortune, also, which I might expect, and finally inherited, from my family, did not, indeed, amount to affluence, but placed me considerably beyond all apprehension of want. I mention these particulars merely because they are true. Many better men than myself have owed their rise from indigence and obscurity to their own talents, which were, doubtless, much more adequate to the task of raising them than any which I possess. But although it would be absurd and ungracious in me to deny that I owe to literature many marks of distinction to which I could not otherwise have aspired, and particularly that of securing the

acquaintance, and even the friendship, of many remarkable persons of the age, to whom I could not otherwise have made my way; it would, on the other hand, be ridiculous to affect gratitude to the public favour, either for my general position in society, or the means of supporting it with decency, matters which had been otherwise secured under the usual chances of human affairs. Thus much I have thought it necessary to say upon a subject, which is, after all, of very little consequence to any one but myself. I proceed to detail the circumstances which engaged me in literary pursuits.

During the last ten years of the eighteenth century, the art of poetry was at a remarkably low ebb in Britain. Hayley, to whom fashion had some years before ascribed a higher degree of reputation than posterity has confirmed, had now lost his reputation for talent, though he still lived beloved and respected as an amiable and accomplished man. The Bard of Memory slumbered on his laurels, and He of Hope had scarce begun to attract his share of public attention. Cowper, a poet of deep feeling and bright genius, was still alive, indeed; but the hypochondria, which was his mental malady, impeded his popularity. Burns, whose genius our southern neighbours could hardly yet comprehend, had long confined himself to song-writing. Names which are now known and distinguished wherever the English language is spoken, were then only beginning to be mentioned; and, unless among the small number of persons who habitually devote a part of their leisure to literature, even those of Southey, Wordsworth, and Coleridge, were still but little known. The realms of Parnassus, like many a kingdom at the period, seemed to lie open to the first

bold invader, whether he should be a daring usurper, or could show a legitimate title of sovereignty.

As far back as 1788, a new species of literature began to be introduced into this country. Germany, long known as a powerful branch of the European confederacy, was then, for the first time, heard of as the cradle of a style of poetry and literature, of a kind much more analogous to that of Britain than either the French, Spanish, or Italian schools, though all three had been at various times cultivated and imitated among us. The names of Lessing, Klopstock, Schiller, and other German poets of eminence, were only known in Britain very imperfectly. *The Sorrows of Werter* was the only composition that had attained any degree of popularity, and the success of that remarkable novel, notwithstanding the distinguished genius of the author, was retarded by the nature of its incidents. To the other compositions of Goethe, whose talents were destined to illuminate the age in which he flourished, the English remained strangers, and much more so to Schiller, Bürger, and a whole cycle of foreigners of distinguished merit. The obscurity to which German literature seemed to be condemned, did not arise from want of brilliancy in the lights by which it was illuminated, but from the palpable thickness of the darkness by which they were surrounded. Frederick II. of Prussia had given a partial and ungracious testimony against his native language and native literature, and impolitically and unwisely, as well as unjustly, had yielded to the French that superiority in letters, which, after his death, paved the way for their obtaining, for a time, an equal superiority in arms. That great Prince, by setting the example of under-

valuing his country in one respect, raised a belief in its general inferiority, and destroyed the manly pride with which a nation is naturally disposed to regard its own peculiar manners and peculiar literature.

Unmoved by the scornful neglect of its sovereigns and nobles, and encouraged by the tide of native genius which flowed in upon the nation, German literature began to assume a new, interesting, and highly impressive character, to which it became impossible for strangers to shut their eyes. That it exhibited the faults of exaggeration and false taste, almost inseparable from the first attempts at the heroic and at the pathetic, cannot be denied. It was, in a word, the first crop of a rich soil, which throws out weeds as well as flowers with a prolific abundance.

It was so late as the 21st day of April 1788 that the literary persons of Edinburgh, of whom, at that period, I am better qualified to speak than of those of Britain generally, or especially those of London, were first made aware of the existence of works of genius in a language cognate with the English, and possessed of the same manly force of expression. They learned, at the same time, that the taste which dictated the German compositions was of a kind as nearly allied to the English as their language. Those who were accustomed from their youth to admire Milton and Shakespeare, became acquainted, I may say for the first time, with the existence of a race of poets who had the same lofty ambition to spurn the flaming boundaries of the universe,[1] and investigate the realms of chaos and old night; and of dramatists, who, disclaiming the pedantry of the unities, sought, at the expense of occasional improbabilities and extravagances, to

[1] [—'Flammantia mœnia mundi.'—Lucretius.—J. G. L.]

present life in its scenes of wildest contrast, and in all its boundless variety of character, mingling, without hesitation, livelier with more serious incidents, and exchanging scenes of tragic distress, as they occur in common life, with those of a comic tendency. This emancipation from the rules so servilely adhered to by the French school, and particularly by their dramatic poets, although it was attended with some disadvantages, especially the risk of extravagance and bombast, was the means of giving free scope to the genius of Goethe, Schiller, and others, which, thus relieved from shackles, was not long in soaring to the highest pitch of poetic sublimity. The late venerable Henry Mackenzie, author of *The Man of Feeling*, in an Essay upon the German Theatre, introduced his countrymen to this new species of national literature, the peculiarities of which he traced with equal truth and spirit, although they were at that time known to him only through the imperfect and uncongenial medium of a French translation. Upon the day already mentioned (21st April 1788), he read to the Royal Society an Essay on German Literature, which made much noise, and produced a powerful effect. 'Germany,' he observed, 'in her literary aspect, presents herself to observation in a singular point of view; that of a country arrived at maturity, along with the neighbouring nations, in the arts and sciences, in the pleasures and refinements of manners, and yet only in its infancy with regard to writings of taste and imagination. This last path, however, from these very circumstances, she pursues with an enthusiasm which no other situation could perhaps have produced, the enthusiasm which novelty inspires, and which the servility incident to

a more cultivated and critical state of literature does not restrain.' At the same time, the accomplished critic showed himself equally familiar with the classical rules of the French stage, and failed not to touch upon the acknowledged advantages which these produced, by the encouragement and regulation of taste, though at the risk of repressing genius.

But it was not the dramatic literature alone of the Germans which was hitherto unknown to their neighbours—their fictitious narratives, their ballad poetry, and other branches of their literature, which are particularly apt to bear the stamp of the extravagant and the supernatural, began to occupy the attention of the British literati.

In Edinburgh, where the remarkable coincidence between the German language and that of the Lowland Scottish encouraged young men to approach this newly discovered spring of literature, a class was formed, of six or seven intimate friends, who proposed to make themselves acquainted with the German language. They were in the habit of living much together, and the time they spent in this new study was felt as a period of great amusement. One source of this diversion was the laziness of one of their number, the present author, who, averse to the necessary toil of grammar and its rules, was in the practice of fighting his way to the knowledge of the German by his acquaintance with the Scottish and Anglo-Saxon dialects, and, of course, frequently committed blunders which were not lost on his more accurate and more studious companions. A more general source of amusement was the despair of the teacher, on finding it impossible to extract from his Scottish students the degree of sensibility necessary, as he thought,

to enjoy the beauties of the author to whom he considered it proper first to introduce them. We were desirous to penetrate at once into the recesses of the Teutonic literature, and therefore were ambitious of perusing Goethe and Schiller, and others whose fame had been sounded by Mackenzie. Dr. Willich (a medical gentleman), who was our teacher, was judiciously disposed to commence our studies with the more simple diction of Gesner, and prescribed to us *The Death of Abel* as the production from which our German tasks were to be drawn. The pietistic style of this author was ill adapted to attract young persons of our age and disposition. We could no more sympathise with the over-strained sentimentality of Adam and his family, than we could have had a fellow-feeling with the jolly Faun of the same author, who broke his beautiful jug, and then made a song on it which might have affected all Staffordshire. To sum up the distresses of Dr. Willich, we, with one consent, voted Abel an insufferable bore, and gave the pre-eminence, in point of masculine character, to his brother Cain, or even to Lucifer himself. When these jests, which arose out of the sickly monotony and affected ecstasies of the poet, failed to amuse us, we had for our entertainment the unutterable sounds manufactured by a Frenchman, our fellow-student, who, with the economical purpose of learning two languages at once, was endeavouring to acquire German, of which he knew nothing, by means of English, concerning which he was nearly as ignorant. Heaven only knows the notes which he uttered, in attempting, with unpractised organs, to imitate the gutturals of these two intractable languages. At length, in the midst of much laughing

and little study, most of us acquired some knowledge, more or less extensive, of the German language, and selected for ourselves, some in the philosophy of Kant, some in the more animated works of the German dramatists, specimens more to our taste than *The Death of Abel*.[1]

About this period, or a year or two sooner, the accomplished and excellent Lord Woodhouselee,[2] one of the friends of my youth, made a spirited version of *The Robbers* of Schiller, which, I believe, was the first published, though an English version appeared soon afterwards in London—as the metropolis then took the lead in everything like literary adventure. The enthusiasm with which this work was received, greatly increased the general taste for German compositions.

While universal curiosity was thus distinguishing the advancing taste for the German language and literature, the success of a very young student, in a juvenile publication, seemed to show that the prevailing taste in that country might be easily employed as a formidable auxiliary to renewing the spirit of our own, upon the same system as when medical persons attempt, by the transfusion of blood, to pass into the veins of an aged and exhausted patient, the vivacity of the circulation and liveliness of sensation which distinguish a young subject. The person who first attempted to introduce something like the German taste into English fictitious dramatic and poetical composition—although

[1] [For further details regarding Scott's German studies, see Lockhart's *Life of Scott*.]

[2] [Alexander Fraser Tytler, a Judge of the Court of Session by the title of Lord Woodhouselee, author of the well-known *Elements of General History*, and long eminent as Professor of History in the University of Edinburgh. He died in 1810.—J. G. L.]

his works, when first published, engaged general attention—is now comparatively forgotten. I mean Matthew Gregory Lewis, whose character and literary history are so immediately connected with the subject of which I am treating, that a few authentic particulars may be here inserted by one to whom he was well known.

Lewis's rank in society was determined by his birth, which, at the same time, assured his fortune. His father was Under-Secretary at War, at that time a very lucrative appointment, and the young poet was provided with a seat in Parliament as soon as his age permitted him to fill it. But his mind did not incline him to politics, or, if it did, they were not of the complexion which his father, attached to Mr. Pitt's administration, would have approved. He was, moreover, indolent, and though possessed of abilities sufficient to conquer any difficulty which might stand in the way of classical attainments, he preferred applying his exertions in a path where they were rewarded with more immediate applause. As he completed his education abroad, he had an opportunity of indulging his inclination for the extraordinary and supernatural, by wandering through the whole enchanted land of German faëry and *diablerie*, not forgetting the paths of her enthusiastic tragedy and romantic poetry.

We are easily induced to imitate what we admire, and Lewis early distinguished himself by a romance in the German taste, called *The Monk*. In this work, written in his twentieth year, and founded on the eastern apologue of the Santon Barsisa, the author introduced supernatural machinery with a courageous consciousness of his own power to manage its ponderous strength, which com-

manded the respect of his reader. *The Monk* was published in 1795, and though liable to the objections common to the school to which it belonged, and to others peculiar to itself, placed its author at once high in the scale of men of letters. Nor can that be regarded as an ordinary exertion of genius, to which Charles Fox paid the unusual compliment of crossing the House of Commons that he might congratulate the young author, whose work obtained high praise from many other able men of that able time. The party which approved *The Monk* was at first superior in the lists, and it was some time before the anonymous author of the *Pursuits of Literature* denounced as puerile and absurd the supernatural machinery which Lewis had introduced:—

> 'I bear an English heart,
> Unused at ghosts or rattling bones to start.'

Yet the acute and learned critic betrays some inconsistency in praising the magic of the Italian poets, and complimenting Mrs. Radcliffe for her success in supernatural imagery, for which at the same moment he thus sternly censures her brother-novelist.

A more legitimate topic of condemnation was the indelicacy of particular passages. The present author will hardly be deemed a willing, or at least an interested apologist for an offence equally repugnant to decency and good-breeding. But as Lewis at once, and with a good grace, submitted to the voice of censure, and expunged the objectionable passages, we cannot help considering the manner in which the fault was insisted on, after all the amends had been offered of which the case

could admit, as in the last degree ungenerous and uncandid. The pertinacity with which the passages so much found fault with were dwelt upon, seemed to warrant a belief that something more was desired than the correction of the author's errors; and that, where the apologies of extreme youth, foreign education, and instant submission, were unable to satisfy the critics' fury, they must have been determined to act on the severity of the old proverb, 'Confess and be hanged.' Certain it is, that other persons, offenders in the same degree, have been permitted to sue out their pardon without either retraction or palinode.[1]

Another peccadillo of the author of *The Monk* was

[1] In justice to a departed friend, I have subjoined his own defence against an accusation so remorselessly persisted in. The following is an extract of a letter to his father:—

Feb. 23, 1798.

'My dear Father,—Though certain that the clamour raised against *The Monk* cannot have given you the smallest doubt of the rectitude of my intentions, or the purity of my principles, yet I am conscious that it must have grieved you to find any doubts on the subject existing in the minds of other people. To express my sorrow for having given you pain is my motive for now addressing you, and also to assure you, that you shall not feel that pain a second time on my account. Having made you feel it at all, would be a sufficient reason, had I no others, to make me regret having published the first edition of *The Monk*; but I have others, weaker, indeed, than the one mentioned, but still sufficiently strong. I perceive that I have put too much confidence in the accuracy of my own judgment; that, convinced of my object being unexceptionable, I did not sufficiently examine whether the means by which I attained that object were equally so; and that, upon many accounts, I have to accuse myself of high imprudence. Let me, however, observe, that twenty is not the age at which prudence is most to be expected. Inexperience prevented my distinguishing what would give offence; but as soon as I found that offence was given, I made the only reparation in my power—I carefully revised the work, and expunged every syllable on which could be grounded the

his having borrowed from Musæus, and from the popular tales of the Germans, the striking and singular adventure of the *Bleeding Nun*. But the bold and free hand with which he traced some scenes, as well of natural as of that which arises from supernatural causes, shows distinctly that the plagiarism could not have been occasioned by any deficiency of invention on his part, though it might take place from wantonness or wilfulness.

In spite of the objections we have stated, *The Monk* was so highly popular, that it seemed to create an epoch in our literature. But the public were chiefly captivated by the poetry with which Mr. Lewis had interspersed his prose narrative. It has now passed from recollection among the changes

slightest construction of immorality. This, indeed, was no difficult task; for the objections rested entirely on expressions too strong, and words carelessly chosen, not on the sentiments, *characters*, or general *tendency* of the work; that the latter is *undeserving* censure, Addison will vouch for me. The moral and outline of my story are taken from an allegory inserted by him in the *Guardian*, and which he commends highly for ability of invention and '*propriety of object*.' Unluckily, in working it up, I thought that the stronger my colours, the more effect would my picture produce; and it never struck me, that the exhibition of vice in her *temporary triumph*, might possibly do as much harm, as her final *exposure* and *punishment* could do good. To do *much* good, indeed, was more than I expected of my book; having always believed that our conduct depends on our own hearts and characters, not on the books we read, or the sentiments we hear. But though I did not hope much benefit to arise from the perusal of a trifling romance, written by a *youth of twenty*, I was in my own mind convinced that no harm could be produced by a work whose subject was furnished by one of our best moralists, and in the composition of which I did not introduce a single incident, or a single character, without meaning to illustrate some maxim universally allowed. It was then with infinite surprise that I heard the outcry raised against the * * * *'

[I regret that the letter, though once perfect, now only exists in my possession as a fragment.—W. S.]

of literary taste; but many may remember, as well as I do, the effect produced by the beautiful ballad of 'Durandarte,' which had the good fortune to be adapted to an air of great sweetness and pathos; by the ghost tale of 'Alonzo and Imogine'; and by several other pieces of legendary poetry, which addressed themselves in all the charms of novelty and of simplicity to a public who had for a long time been unused to any regale of the kind. In his poetry as well as his prose, Mr. Lewis had been a successful imitator of the Germans, both in his attachment to the ancient ballad, and in the tone of superstition which they willingly mingle with it. New arrangements of the stanza, and a varied construction of verses, were also adopted, and welcomed as an addition of a new string to the British harp. In this respect, the stanza in which 'Alonzo the Brave' is written, was greatly admired, and received as an improvement worthy of adoption into English poetry.

In short, Lewis's works were admired, and the author became famous, not merely through his own merit, though that was of no mean quality, but because he had in some measure taken the public by surprise, by using a style of composition, which, like national melodies, is so congenial to the general taste, that, though it palls by being much hackneyed, it has only to be for a short time forgotten in order to recover its original popularity.

It chanced that, while his fame was at the highest, Mr. Lewis became almost a yearly visitor to Scotland, chiefly from attachment to the illustrious family of Argyle. The writer of these remarks had the advantage of being made known to the most distinguished author of the day, by a

lady who belongs by birth to that family, and is equally distinguished by her beauty and accomplishments.[1] Out of this accidental acquaintance, which increased into a sort of intimacy, consequences arose which altered almost all the Scottish ballad-maker's future prospects in life.

In early youth I had been an eager student of Ballad Poetry; and the tree is still in my recollection, beneath which I lay and first entered upon the enchanting perusal of Percy's *Reliques of Ancient Poetry,* although it has long perished in the general blight which affected the whole race of Oriental platanus to which it belonged.[2] The taste of another person had strongly encouraged my own researches into this species of legendary lore. But I had never dreamed of an attempt to imitate what gave me so much pleasure.

I had, indeed, tried the metrical translations which were occasionally recommended to us at the High School. I got credit for attempting to do what was enjoined, but very little for the mode in which the task was performed, and I used to feel not a little mortified when my versions were placed in contrast with others of admitted merit. At one period of my schoolboy days, I was so far left to my own desires as to become guilty of Verses on a Thunder-storm, which were much approved of, until a malevolent critic sprung up, in the shape of an apothecary's blue-buskined wife, who affirmed that my most sweet poetry was stolen from an old

[1] [The Lady Charlotte Bury.—J. G. L.]

[2] This tree grew in a very large garden attached to a cottage at Kelso, the residence of my father's sister, where I spent many of the happiest days of my youth. (1831.) [See further Lockhart's *Life of Scott.*]

magazine. I never forgave the imputation, and even now I acknowledge some resentment against the poor woman's memory. She indeed accused me unjustly, when she said I had stolen my brooms ready made; but as I had, like most premature poets, copied all the words and ideas of which my verses consisted, she was so far right. I made one or two faint attempts at verse, after I had undergone this sort of daw-plucking at the hands of the apothecary's wife; but some friend or other always advised me to put my verses in the fire, and, like Dorax in the play, I submitted, though 'with a swelling heart.' In short, excepting the usual tribute to a mistress's eyebrow, which is the language of passion rather than poetry, I had not for ten years indulged the wish to couple so much as *love* and *dove*, when, finding Lewis in possession of so much reputation, and conceiving that, if I fell behind him in poetical powers, I considerably exceeded him in general information, I suddenly took it into my head to attempt the style of poetry by which he had raised himself to fame.

This idea was hurried into execution, in consequence of a temptation which others, as well as the author, found it difficult to resist. The celebrated ballad of 'Lenoré,' by Bürger, was about this time introduced into England; and it is remarkable, that, written as far back as 1775, it was upwards of twenty years before it was known in Britain, though calculated to make so strong an impression. The wild character of the tale was such as struck the imagination of all who read it, although the idea of the lady's ride behind the spectre horseman had been long before hit upon by an English ballad-maker. But this pretended

English original, if in reality it be such, is so dull, flat, and prosaic, as to leave the distinguished German author all that is valuable in his story, by clothing it with a fanciful wildness of expression, which serves to set forth the marvellous tale in its native terror. The ballad of 'Lenoré' accordingly possessed general attractions for such of the English as understood the language in which it is written; and, as if there had been a charm in the ballad, no one seemed to cast his eyes upon it without a desire to make it known by translation to his own countrymen, and six or seven versions were accordingly presented to the public. Although the present author was one of those who intruded his translation on the world at this time, he may fairly exculpate himself from the rashness of entering the lists against so many rivals. The circumstances which threw him into this competition were quite accidental, and of a nature tending to show how much the destiny of human life depends upon unimportant occurrences, to which little consequence is attached at the moment.

About the summer of 1793 or 1794, the celebrated Miss Lætitia Aikin, better known as Mrs. Barbauld, paid a visit to Edinburgh, and was received by such literary society as the place then boasted, with the hospitality to which her talents and her worth entitled her. Among others, she was kindly welcomed by the late excellent and admired Professor Dugald Stewart, his lady, and family. It was in their evening society that Miss Aikin drew from her pocket-book a version of 'Lenoré,' executed by William Taylor, Esq., of Norwich, with as much freedom as was consistent with great spirit and scrupulous fidelity. She read

this composition to the company, who were electrified by the tale. It was the more successful, that Mr. Taylor had boldly copied the imitative harmony of the German, and described the spectral journey in language resembling that of the original. Bürger had thus painted the ghostly career :—

> 'Und hurre, hurre, hop, hop, hop,
> Gings fort in sausendem Galopp,
> Dass Ross und Reiter schnoben,
> Und Kies und Funken stoben.'

The words were rendered by the kindred sounds in English :—

> 'Tramp, tramp, across the land they speede,
> Splash, splash, across the sea;
> Hurrah, the dead can ride apace!
> Dost fear to ride with me?'

When Miss Aikin had finished her recitation, she replaced in her pocket-book the paper from which she had read it, and enjoyed the satisfaction of having made a strong impression on the hearers, whose bosoms thrilled yet the deeper, as the ballad was not to be more closely introduced to them.

The author was not present upon this occasion, although he had then the distinguished advantage of being a familiar friend and frequent visitor of Professor Stewart and his family. But he was absent from town while Miss Aikin was in Edinburgh, and it was not until his return that he found all his friends in rapture with the intelligence and good sense of their visitor, but in particular with the wonderful translation from the German, by means of which she had delighted and astonished them. The enthusiastic description given of

Bürger's ballad, and the broken account of the story of which only two lines were recollected, inspired the author, who had some acquaintance, as has been said, with the German language, and a strong taste for popular poetry, with a desire to see the original.

This was not a wish easily gratified; German works were at that time seldom found in London for sale—in Edinburgh never. A lady of noble German descent,[1] whose friendship I have enjoyed for many years, found means, however, to procure me a copy of Bürger's works from Hamburg. The perusal of the original rather exceeded than disappointed the expectations which the report of Mr. Stewart's family had induced me to form. At length, when the book had been a few hours in my possession, I found myself giving an animated account of the poem to a friend, and rashly added a promise to furnish a copy in English ballad verse.

I well recollect that I began my task after supper, and finished it about daybreak the next morning, by which time the ideas which the task had a tendency to summon up were rather of an uncomfortable character. As my object was much more to make a good translation of the poem for those whom I wished to please, than to acquire any poetical fame for myself, I retained in my translation the two lines which Mr. Taylor had rendered with equal boldness and felicity.

[1] Born Countess Harriet Bruhl of Martinskirchen, and married to Hugh Scott, Esq., of Harden, the author's relative and much-valued friend almost from infancy. [See further Lockhart's *Life of Scott*. In 1835 Mr. Scott of Harden's right of succession, through his mother, to the peerage of Polwarth was allowed by the House of Lords.]

My attempt succeeded far beyond my expectations; and it may readily be believed that I was induced to persevere in a pursuit which gratified my own vanity, while it seemed to amuse others. I accomplished a translation of 'Der Wilde Jäger' —a romantic ballad founded on a superstition universally current in Germany, and known also in Scotland and France. In this I took rather more licence than in versifying 'Lenoré'; and I balladised one or two other poems of Bürger with more or less success. In the course of a few weeks, my own vanity, and favourable opinion of friends, interested by the temporary revival of a species of poetry containing a germ of popularity of which perhaps they were not themselves aware, urged me to the decisive step of sending a selection, at least, of my translations to the press, to save the numerous applications which were made for copies. When was there an author deaf to such a recommendation? In 1796, the present author was prevailed on, 'by request of friends,' to indulge his own vanity by publishing the translation of 'Lenoré,' with that of 'The Wild Huntsman,' in a thin quarto.[1]

The fate of this, my first publication, was by no means flattering. I distributed so many copies among my friends as, according to the booksellers, materially to interfere with the sale; and the number of translations which appeared in England about the same time, including that of Mr. Taylor, to which I had been so much indebted, and which was published in *The Monthly Magazine*, were sufficient to exclude a provincial writer from competition. However different my success might have

[1] [This thin quarto was published by Messrs. Manners and Miller of Edinburgh.—J. G. L.]

been, had I been fortunate to have led the way in the general scramble for precedence, my efforts sunk unnoticed when launched at the same time with those of Mr. Taylor (upon whose property I had committed the kind of piracy already noticed, and who generously forgave me the invasion of his rights); of my ingenious and amiable friend of many years, William Robert Spenser; of Mr. Pye, the laureate of the day, and many others besides. In a word, my adventure, where so many pushed off to sea, proved a dead loss, and a great part of the edition was condemned to the service of the trunk-maker. Nay, so complete was the failure of the unfortunate ballads, that the very existence of them was soon forgotten; and, in a newspaper, in which I very lately read, to my no small horror, a most appalling list of my own various publications, I saw this, my first offence, had escaped the industrious collector, for whose indefatigable research I may in gratitude wish a better object.[1]

The failure of my first publication did not operate, in any unpleasant degree, either on my feelings or spirits. I was coldly received by strangers, but my reputation began rather to increase among my own friends, and, on the whole, I was more bent to show the world that it neglected something worth notice, than to be affronted by its indifference. Or rather, to speak candidly, I found pleasure in the literary labour in

[1] [The list here referred to was drawn up and inserted in the *Caledonian Mercury*, by Mr. James Shaw, for thirty years past in the house of Sir Walter Scott's publishers, Messrs. Constable and Cadell of Edinburgh; and use will be made of it hereafter. —J. G. L.]

which I had, almost by accident, become engaged, and laboured, less in the hope of pleasing others, though certainly without despair of doing so, than in the pursuit of a new and agreeable amusement to myself. I pursued the German language keenly, and, though far from being a correct scholar, became a bold and daring reader, nay, even translator, of various dramatic pieces from that tongue.[1]

The want of books at that time (about 1796) was a great interruption to the rapidity of my movements; for the young do not know, and perhaps my own contemporaries may have forgotten, the difficulty with which publications were then procured from the Continent. The worthy and excellent friend, of whom I gave a sketch many years afterwards in the person of Jonathan Oldbuck,[2] procured me Adelung's *Dictionary*, through the mediation of Father Pepper, a monk of the Scotch College of Ratisbon. Other wants of the same nature were supplied by Mrs. Scott of Harden, whose kindness in a similar instance I have had already occasion to acknowledge. Through this lady's connections on the Continent I obtained copies of Bürger, Schiller, Goethe, and other standard German works; and though the obligation be of a distant date, it still remains impressed on my memory, after a life spent in a constant interchange of friendship and kindness

[1] [Sir Walter Scott's second publication was a translation of Goethe's drama of *Goetz of Berlichingen with the Iron Hand*, which appeared in 1799. He about the same time translated several other German plays, which yet remain in MS.—J. G. L.]

[2] [The late George Constable, Esq. See Introduction to *The Antiquary*.—J. G. L.]

with that family, which is, according to Scottish ideas, the head of my house.

Being thus furnished with the necessary originals, I began to translate on all sides, certainly without anything like an accurate knowledge of the language; and although the dramas of Goethe, Schiller and others, powerfully attracted one whose early attention to the German had been arrested by Mackenzie's Dissertation, and the play of *The Robbers*, yet the ballad poetry, in which I had made a bold essay, was still my favourite. I was yet more delighted on finding that the old English, and especially the Scottish language, were so nearly similar to the German, not in sound merely, but in the turn of phrase, that they were capable of being rendered line for line, with very little variation.[1]

[1] Among the popular Ballads, or Volkslieder, of the celebrated Herder, is (take one instance out of many) a version of the old Scottish song of 'Sir Patrick Spence,' in which, but for difference of orthography, the two languages can be scarcely distinguished from each other. For example:—

'The King sits in Dumfermling town,
Drinking the blood-red wine;
"Where will I get a good skipper
To sail this ship of mine?"'

'Der Koenig sitzt in Dumfermling Schloss,
Er trinkt blutrothen Wein;
"O wo treff' ich einen Segler gut
Dies Schiff zu segeln mein?"'

In like manner, the opening stanza of 'Child Waters,' and many other Scottish ballads, fall as naturally and easily into the German habits and forms of speech, as if they had originally been composed in that language:—

'About Yule, when the wind was cule,
And the round tables began,
O there is come to our king's court
Mony weel favour'd man.'

'In Christmessfast in Winter kalt,
Als Tafel rund began;
Da kam zu König's Hoff und Hall
Manch wackner Ritter an.'

It requires only a smattering of both languages to see at what cheap expense, even of vocables and rhymes, the popular poetry of the one may be transferred to the other. Hardly anything is more flattering to a Scottish student of German; it resembles the unexpected discovery of an old friend in a foreign land.

By degrees, I acquired sufficient confidence to attempt the imitation of what I admired. The ballad called 'Glenfinlas' was, I think, the first original poem which I ventured to compose. As it is supposed to be a translation from the Gaelic, I considered myself as liberated from imitating the antiquated language and rude rhythm of the Minstrel ballad. A versification of an Ossianic fragment came nearer to the idea I had formed of my task; for although controversy may have arisen concerning the authenticity of these poems, yet I never heard it disputed, by those whom an accurate knowledge of the Gaelic rendered competent judges, that in their spirit and diction they nearly resemble fragments of poetry extant in that language, to the genuine antiquity of which no doubt can attach. Indeed, the celebrated dispute on that subject is something like the more bloody, though scarce fiercer controversy, about the Popish Plot in Charles the Second's time, concerning which Dryden has said:—

> 'Succeeding times will equal folly call,
> Believing nothing, or believing all.'

The Celtic people of Erin and Albyn had, in short, a style of poetry properly called natural, though MacPherson was rather an excellent poet than a faithful editor and translator. This style and fashion of poetry, existing in a different language, was supposed to give the original of 'Glenfinlas,' and the author was to pass for one who had used his best command of English to do the Gaelic model justice. In one point, the incidents of the poem were irreconcilable with the costume of the times in which they were laid. The

ancient Highland chieftains, when they had a mind to 'hunt the dun deer down,' did not retreat into solitary bothies, or trust the success of the chase to their own unassisted exertions, without a single gillie to help them; they assembled their clan, and all partook of the sport, forming a ring, or enclosure, called the Tinchell, and driving the prey towards the most distinguished persons of the hunt. This course would not have suited me, so Ronald and Moy were cooped up in their solitary wigwam, like two moorfowl-shooters of the present day.

After 'Glenfinlas,' I undertook another ballad, called 'The Eve of St. John.' The incidents, except the hints alluded to in the marginal notes, are entirely imaginary, but the scene was that of my early childhood. Some idle persons had of late years, during the proprietor's absence, torn the iron-grated door of Smailholm Tower from its hinges, and thrown it down the rock. I was an earnest suitor to my friend and kinsman, Mr. Scott of Harden, already mentioned, that the dilapidation might be put a stop to, and the mischief repaired. This was readily promised, on condition that I should make a ballad, of which the scene should lie at Smailholm Tower, and among the crags where it is situated.[1] The ballad was approved of, as well as its companion 'Glenfinlas'; and I remember that they procured me many marks of attention and kindness from Duke John of Roxburghe, who gave me the unlimited

[1] This is of little consequence, except in as far as it contradicts a story which I have seen in print, averring that Mr. Scott of Harden was himself about to destroy the ancient building; than which nothing can be more inaccurate. [See further regarding Smailholm Tower in the introduction to the 'Eve of St. John.']

use of that celebrated collection of volumes from which the Roxburghe Club derives its name.

Thus was I set up for a poet, like a pedlar who has got two ballads to begin the world upon, and I hastened to make the round of all my acquaintances, showing my precious wares, and requesting criticism—a boon which no author asks in vain. For it may be observed, that, in the fine arts, those who are in no respect able to produce any specimens themselves, hold themselves not the less entitled to decide upon the works of others; and, no doubt, with justice to a certain degree: for the merits of composition produced for the express purpose of pleasing the world at large, can only be judged of by the opinion of individuals, and perhaps, as in the case of Molière's old woman, the less sophisticated the person consulted so much the better.[1] But I was ignorant, at the time I speak of, that though the applause of the many may justly appreciate the general merits of a piece, it is not so safe to submit such a performance to the more minute criticism of the same individuals, when each, in turn, having seated himself in the censor's chair, has placed his mind in a critical attitude, and delivers his opinion sententiously and *ex cathedrâ*. General applause was in almost every case freely tendered, but the abatements in the way of proposed alterations and corrections, were cruelly puzzling. It was in vain the young author, listening with becoming modesty, and with a natural wish to please, cut and carved, tinkered and coopered, upon his unfortunate ballad—it was

[1] [See the account of a conversation between Sir Walter Scott and Sir Thomas Lawrence, in CUNNINGHAM'S *Lives of British Painters*, etc., vol. vi. p. 236.—J. G. L.]

in vain that he placed, displaced, replaced, and misplaced; every one of his advisers was displeased with the concessions made to his co-assessors, and the author was blamed by some one, in almost every case, for having made two holes in attempting to patch up one.

At last, after thinking seriously on the subject, I wrote out a fair copy (of 'Glenfinlas,' I think), and marked all the various corrections which had been proposed. On the whole, I found that I had been required to alter every verse, almost every line, and the only stanzas of the whole ballad which escaped criticism, were two which could neither be termed good nor bad, speaking of them as poetry, but were of a mere commonplace character, absolutely necessary for conducting the business of the tale. This unexpected result, after about a fortnight's anxiety, led me to adopt a rule from which I have seldom departed during more than thirty years of literary life. When a friend, whose judgment I respect, has decided, and upon good advisement told me, that a manuscript was worth nothing, or at least possessed no redeeming qualities sufficient to atone for its defects, I have generally cast it aside; but I am little in the custom of paying attention to minute criticisms, or of offering such to any friend who may do me the honour to consult me. I am convinced, that, in general, in removing even errors of a trivial or venial kind, the character of originality is lost, which, upon the whole, may be that which is most valuable in the production.

About the time that I shook hands with criticism and reduced my ballads back to their original form, stripping them without remorse of those 'lendings'

which I had adopted at the suggestion of others, an opportunity unexpectedly offered of introducing to the world what had hitherto been confined to a circle of friends. Lewis had announced a collection, first intended to bear the title of *Tales of Terror*, and afterwards published under that of *Tales of Wonder*. As this was to be a collection of tales turning on the preternatural, there were risks in the plan of which the ingenious editor was not aware. The supernatural, though appealing to certain powerful emotions very widely and deeply sown amongst the human race, is, nevertheless, a spring which is peculiarly apt to lose its elasticity by being too much pressed on, and a collection of ghost-stories is not more likely to be terrible, than a collection of jests to be merry or entertaining. But although the very title of the proposed work carried in it an obstruction to its effect, this was far from being suspected at the time, for the popularity of the editor, and of his compositions, seemed a warrant for his success. The distinguished favour with which the *Castle Spectre* was received upon the stage, seemed an additional pledge for the safety of his new attempt. I readily agreed to contribute the ballads of 'Glenfinlas' and of 'The Eve of Saint John,' with one or two others of less merit; and my friend Dr. Leyden became also a contributor. Mr. Southey, a tower of strength, added 'The Old Woman of Berkeley,' 'Lord William,' and several other interesting ballads of the same class, to the proposed collection.

In the meantime, my friend Lewis found it no easy matter to discipline his northern recruits. He was a martinet, if I may so term him, in the

accuracy of rhymes and of numbers; I may add, he had a right to be so, for few persons have exhibited more mastery of rhyme, or greater command over the melody of verse. He was, therefore, rigid in exacting similar accuracy from others, and as I was quite unaccustomed to the mechanical part of poetry, and used rhymes which were merely permissible, as readily as those which were legitimate, contests often arose amongst us, which were exasperated by the pertinacity of my Mentor, who, as all who knew him can testify, was no granter of propositions. As an instance of the obstinacy with which I had so lately adopted a tone of defiance to criticism, the reader will find in the Appendix (see p. 53, *post*) a few specimens of the lectures which I underwent from my friend Lewis, and which did not at the time produce any effect on my inflexibility, though I did not forget them at a future period.

The proposed publication of the *Tales of Wonder* was, from one reason or another, postponed till the year 1801, a circumstance by which, of itself, the success of the work was considerably impeded, for protracted expectation always leads to disappointment. But, besides, there were circumstances of various kinds which contributed to its depreciation, some of which were imputable to the editor, or author, and some to the bookseller.

The former remained insensible of the passion for ballads and ballad-mongers having been for some time on the wane, and that with such alteration in the public taste, the chance of success in that line was diminished. What had been at first received as simple and natural, was now sneered

at as puerile and extravagant. Another objection was, that my friend Lewis had a high but mistaken opinion of his own powers of humour. The truth was, that though he could throw some gaiety into his lighter pieces, after the manner of the French writers, his attempts at what is called pleasantry in English, wholly wanted the quality of humour, and were generally failures. But this he would not allow; and the *Tales of Wonder* were filled, in a sense, with attempts at comedy which might be generally accounted abortive.

Another objection, which might have been more easily foreseen, subjected the editor to a charge of which Mat Lewis was entirely incapable—that of collusion with his publisher in an undue attack on the pockets of the public. The *Tales of Wonder* formed a work in royal octavo, and were, by large printing, *driven out*, as it is technically termed, to two volumes, which were sold at a high price. Purchasers murmured at finding that this size had been attained by the insertion of some of the best-known pieces of the English language, such as Dryden's 'Theodore and Honoria,' Parnell's 'Hermit,' Lisle's 'Porsenna, King of Russia,' and many other popular poems of old date, and generally known, which ought not in conscience to have made part of a set of tales, 'written and collected' by a modern author. His bookseller was also accused in the public prints, whether truly or not I am uncertain, of having attempted to secure to himself the entire profits of the large sale which he expected, by refusing to his brethren the allowances usually, if not in all cases, made to the retail trade.

Lewis, one of the most liberal as well as

benevolent of mankind, had not the least participation in these proceedings of his bibliopolist; but his work sunk under the obloquy which was heaped on it by the offended parties. The book was termed *Tales of Plunder,* was censured by reviewers, and attacked in newspapers and magazines. A very clever parody was made on the style and the person of the author, and the world laughed as willingly as if it had never applauded.

Thus, owing to the failure of the vehicle I had chosen, my efforts to present myself before the public as an original writer proved as vain as those by which I had previously endeavoured to distinguish myself as a translator. Like Lord Home, however, at the battle of Flodden, I did so far well, that I was able to stand and save myself; and amidst the general depreciation of the *Tales of Wonder,* my small share of the obnoxious publication was dismissed without much censure, and in some cases obtained praise from the critics.

The consequence of my escape made me naturally more daring, and I attempted, in my own name, a collection of ballads of various kinds, both ancient and modern, to be connected by the common tie of relation to the Border districts, in which I had gathered the materials. The original preface explains my purpose, and the assistance of various kinds which I met with. The edition was curious, as being the first work printed by my friend and schoolfellow, Mr. James Ballantyne, who, at that period, was editor of a provincial newspaper, called *The Kelso Mail.* When the book came out, in 1802, the imprint, Kelso, was read with wonder by amateurs of typography, who had never heard of such a place, and were astonished at the example

of handsome printing which so obscure a town produced.

As for the editorial part of the task, my attempt to imitate the plan and style of Bishop Percy, observing only more strict fidelity concerning my originals, was favourably received by the public, and there was a demand within a short space for a second edition, to which I proposed to add a third volume. Messrs. Cadell and Davies, the first publishers of the work, declined the publication of this second edition, which was undertaken, at a very liberal price, by the well-known firm of Messrs. Longman and Rees of Paternoster Row. My progress in the literary career in which I might now be considered as seriously engaged, the reader will find briefly traced in an Introduction prefixed to the *Lay of the Last Minstrel.*

In the meantime the Editor has accomplished his proposed task of acquainting the reader with some particulars respecting the modern imitations of the Ancient Ballad, and the circumstances which gradually, and almost insensibly, engaged himself in that species of literary employment. W. S.

ABBOTSFORD, *April* 1830.

APPENDIX

EXTRACTS FROM THE CORRESPONDENCE OF M. G. LEWIS

My attention was called to this subject, which is now of an old date, by reading the following passage in Medwin's *Account of Some Passages in Lord Bryon's later Years.* Lord Byron is supposed to speak: 'When Walter Scott began to write poetry, which was not at a very early age, Monk Lewis corrected his verse: he understood little then of the mechanical part of the art. The 'Fire King,' in the *Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border,* was almost all Lewis's. One of the Ballads in that work, and, except some of Leyden's, perhaps one of the best, was made from a story picked up in a stage-coach—I mean that of 'Will Jones.'

> 'They boil'd Will Jones within the pot,
> And not much fat had Will.'

'I hope Walter Scott did not write the review on "Christabel"; for he certainly, in common with many of us, is indebted to Coleridge. But for him, perhaps, *The Lay of the Last Minstrel* would never have been thought of. The line,

> "Jesu Maria shield thee well!"

is word for word from Coleridge.'

There are some parts of this passage extremely mistaken and exaggerated, as generally attends any attempt to record what passes in casual conversation, which resembles, in difficulty, the experiments of the old chemists for fixing quicksilver.

The following is a specimen of my poor friend Lewis's criticism on my juvenile attempts at ballad poetry; severe enough, perhaps, but for which I was much indebted to him, as forcing upon the notice of a young and careless author hints which the said author's vanity

made him unwilling to attend to, but which were absolutely necessary to any hope of his ultimate success.

Supposed 1799.

'THANK you for your revised "Glenfinlas." I *grumble*, but say no more on *this* subject, although I hope you will not be so inflexible on that of your other Ballads; for I do not despair of convincing you in time, that a *bad* rhyme is, in fact, no rhyme at all. You desired me to point out my objections, leaving you at liberty to make use of them or not; and so have at "Frederic and Alice." Stanza 1st, "*hies*" and "*joys*" are not rhymes; the 1st stanza ends with "*joys*"; the 2nd begins with "*joying.*" In the 4th, there is too sudden a change of tenses, "*flows*" and "*rose.*" 6th, 7th, and 8th, I like much. 9th, Does not "*ring his ears*" sound ludicrous in yours? The first idea that presents itself is, that his ears were pulled; but even *the ringing of the ears* does not please. 12th, "*Shower*" and "*roar,*" not rhymes. "*Soil*" and "*aisle*" in the 13th are not much better; but "*head*" and "*descried*" are execrable. In the 14th, "*bar*" and "*stair*" are ditto; and "*groping*" is a nasty word. *Vide* Johnson, "*He gropes his breeches with a monarch's air.*" In the 15th you change your metre, which has always an unpleasant effect; and "*safe*" and "*receive*" rhyme just about as well as Scott and Lewis would. 16th, "*Within*" and "*strain*" are not rhymes. 17th, "*Hear*" and "*air,*" not rhymes. 18th, Two metres are mixed; the same objection to the third line of the 19th. Observe, that, in the Ballad, I do not always object to a variation of metre; but then it ought to increase the melody, whereas, in my opinion, in these instances, it is diminished.

'THE CHASE.—12th, The 2nd line reads very harshly; and "*choir*" and "*lore*" are not rhymes. 13th, "*Rides*" and "*side*" are not rhymes. 30th, "*Pour*" and "*obscure,*" not rhymes. 40th, "*Spreads*" and "*invades*" are not rhymes. 46th, "*Rends*" and "*ascend*" are not rhymes.

'WILLIAM AND HELEN.—In order that I may bring it

nearer the original title, pray introduce, in the first stanza, the name of *Ellenora*, instead of Ellen. "*Crusade*" and "*sped*," not rhymes in the 2nd. 3rd, "*Made*" and "*shed*" are not rhymes; and if they were, come too close to the rhymes in the 2nd. In the 4th, "*Joy*" and "*victory*" are not rhymes. 7th, The first line wants a verb, otherwise is not intelligible. 13th, "*Grace*" and "*bliss*" are not rhymes. 14th, "*Bale*" and "*hell*" are not rhymes. 16th, "*Vain*" and "*fruitless*" is tautology; and as a verb is wanted, the line will run better thus, "And vain is every prayer." 19th, Is not "*to her*" absolutely necessary in the 4th line? 20th, "*Grace*" and "*bliss*," not rhymes. 21st, "*Bale*" and "*hell*," not rhymes. 22nd, I do not like the word "*spent*." 23rd, "*O'er*" and "*star*" are vile rhymes. 26th, A verb is wanted in the 4th line; better thus, "Then whispers thus a voice." 28th, Is not, "Is't thou, my love?" better than "My love! my love!"? 31st, If "*wight*" means, as I conjecture, "*enchanted*," does not this let the cat out of the bag? Ought not the spur to be *sharp* rather than *bright*? In the 4th line, "*Stay*" and "*day*" jingle together; would it not be better, "I must be gone e'er [*sic*] day?" 32nd, "*Steed*" and "*bed*" are not rhymes. 34th, "*Bride*" and "*bed*," not rhymes. 35th, "*Seat*" and "*await*," not rhymes. 39th, "*Keep hold*" and "*sit fast*" seem to *my* ear vulgar and prosaic. 40th, The 4th line is defective in point of English, and, indeed, I do not quite understand the meaning. 43rd, "*Arose*" and "*pursues*" are not rhymes. 45th, I am not pleased with the epithet "*savage*"; and the latter part of the stanza is, to me, unintelligible. 49th, Is it not closer to the original in line 3rd to say, "Swift ride the dead"? 50th, Does the rain "whistle"? 55th, line 3rd, Does it express, "Is Helen afraid of them?" 59th, "*Door*" and "*flower*" do not rhyme together. 60th, "*Scared*" and "*heard*" are not rhymes. 63rd, "*Bone*" and "*skeleton*," not rhymes. 64th, The last line sounds ludicrous; one fancies the heroine coming down with a plump, and sprawling upon her bottom. I have now finished my

severe examination, and pointed out every objection which I think can be suggested.'

6th January 1799.

Wellwyn, —99.

'Dear Scott,

'Your last Ballad reached me just as I was stepping into my chaise to go to Brocket Hall (Lord Melbourne's), so I took it with me, and exhibited both that and "Glenfinlas" with great success. I must not, however, conceal from you, that nobody understood the *Lady* Flora of Glengyle to be a disguised demon till the catastrophe arrived; and that the opinion was universal, that some previous stanzas ought to be introduced descriptive of the nature and office of *the wayward Ladies of the Wood.* William Lambe,[1] too (who writes good verses himself, and, therefore, may be allowed to judge those of other people), was decidedly for the omission of the last stanza but one. These were the only objections started. I thought it as well that you should know them, whether you attend to them or not. With regard to "St. John's Eve," I like it much, and instead of finding fault with its broken metre, I approve of it highly. I think, in this last Ballad, you have hit off the ancient manner better than in your former ones. "Glenfinlas," for example, is more like a polished tale, than an old Ballad. But why, in verse 6th, is the Baron's helmet hacked and hewed, if (as we are given to understand) he had assassinated his enemy? Ought not *tore* to be *torn*? *Tore* seems to me not English. In verse 16th, the last line is word for word from "Gil Morrice." 21st, "*Floor*" and "*bower*" are not rhymes,' etc., etc., etc.

The gentleman noticed in the following letter, as partaker in the author's heresies respecting rhyme, had the less occasion to justify such licence, as his own have been singularly accurate. Mr. Smythe is now Professor of Modern History at Cambridge.[2]

[1] [Now Lord Melbourne.—J. G. L.] [The second Lord Melbourne (1779-1848), afterwards Prime Minister. He was then a contributor of verse to Monk Lewis's weekly paper *The Bugle.*]

[2] [He published *English Lyrics*, 1797, of which a fifth edition with memoir appeared in 1850.]

LONDON, *January* 24, 1799.

'I MUST not omit telling you, for your own comfort and that of all such persons as are *wicked* enough to make bad rhymes, that Mr. Smythe (a very clever man at Cambridge) took great pains the other day to convince me, not merely that a bad rhyme might pass, but that occasionally a bad rhyme was better than a good one!!!!!! I need not tell you that he left me as great an infidel on this subject as he found me.

'Ever yours,

'M. G. LEWIS.'

The next letter respects the Ballad called the 'Fire King,' stated by Captain Medwin to be almost all Lewis's. This is an entire misconception. Lewis, who was very fond of his idea of four elementary kings, had prevailed on me to supply a Fire King. After being repeatedly urged to the task, I sat down one day after dinner, and wrote the 'Fire King,' as it was published in the *Tales of Wonder*. The next extract gives an account of the manner in which Lewis received it, which was not very favourable; but instead of writing the greater part, he did not write a single word of it. Dr. Leyden, now no more, and another gentleman who still survives, were sitting at my side while I wrote it; nor did my occupation prevent the circulation of the bottle.

Leyden wrote a ballad for the Cloud King, which is mentioned in the ensuing extract. But it did not answer Mat's ideas, either in the colour of the wings, or some point of costume equally important; so Lewis, who was otherwise fond of the Ballad, converted it into the Elfin King, and wrote a Cloud King himself, to finish the hierarchy in the way desired.

There is a leading mistake in the passage from Captain Medwin. *The Minstrelsy of the Border* is spoken of, but what is meant is the *Tales of Wonder*. The former work contains none of the Ballads mentioned by Mr. Medwin—the latter has them all. Indeed, the dynasty of Elemental Kings were written entirely for Mr. Lewis's publication.

My intimate friend, William Clerk, Esq., was the per-

son who heard the legend of Bill Jones told in a mail-coach by a sea-captain, who imagined himself to have seen the ghost to which it relates. The tale was versified by Lewis himself. I forget where it was published, but certainly in no miscellany or publication of mine.

I have only to add, in allusion to the passage I have quoted, that I never wrote a word parodying either Mr. Coleridge or any one else, which, in that distinguished instance, it would have been most ungracious in me to have done; for which the reader will see reasons in the Introduction to *The Lay of the Last Minstrel.*'

LONDON, *3rd February* 1800.

'DEAR SCOTT,

'I RETURN you many thanks for your Ballad, and the Extract, and I shall be very much obliged to your friend for the "Cloud King." I must, however, make one criticism upon the stanzas which you sent me. The Spirit, being a wicked one, must not have such delicate wings as pale-blue ones. He has nothing to do with Heaven except to deface it with storms; and, therefore, in *The Monk*, I have fitted him with a pair of sable pinions, to which I must request your friend to adapt his stanza. With the others I am much pleased, as I am with your "Fire King"; but everybody makes the same objection to it, and expresses a wish that you had conformed your spirit to the description given of him in *The Monk*, where his office is to play the Will-o'-the-Wisp, and lead travellers into bogs, etc. It is also objected to, his being removed from his native land, Denmark, to Palestine; and that the office assigned to him in your Ballad has nothing peculiar to the "Fire King," but would have suited Arimanes, Beelzebub, or any other evil spirit as well. However, the Ballad itself I think very pretty. I suppose you have heard from Bell respecting the copies of the Ballads. I was too much distrest at the time to write myself,' etc., etc.

'M. G. L.'

MINSTRELSY

OF THE

SCOTTISH BORDER

PART THIRD

IMITATIONS

OF

THE ANCIENT BALLAD

CHRISTIE'S WILL

In the reign of Charles I., when the moss-trooping practices were not entirely discontinued, the tower of Gilnockie, in the parish of Cannoby, was occupied by William Armstrong, called, for distinction's sake, *Christie's Will*, a lineal descendant of the famous John Armstrong, of Gilnockie, executed by James V.[1] The hereditary love of plunder had descended to this person with the family mansion; and, upon some marauding party, he was seized, and imprisoned in the Tolbooth of Jedburgh. The Earl of Traquair, Lord High Treasurer, happening to visit Jedburgh, and knowing Christie's Will, inquired the cause of his confinement. Will replied, he was imprisoned for stealing two *tethers* (halters); but, upon being more closely interrogated, acknowledged that there were two *delicate colts* at the end of them. The joke, such as it was, amused the Earl, who exerted his interest, and succeeded in releasing Christie's Will from bondage. Some time afterwards, a lawsuit, of importance to Lord Tra-

[1] For his pedigree, the reader may consult the Appendix to the ballad of Johnie Armstrong, vol. i. p. 362. [It is probable that the tombstone at Sark to a William Armstrong, of which there is an engraving in Scott's *Border Exploits* (1832), p. 329, and which Scott supposed to be that of Kinmont Willie, was that of Christie's Will. The Armstrong to whom it refers died in 1658, at the age of fifty-six.]

quair, was to be decided in the Court of Session; and there was every reason to believe that the judgment would turn upon the voice of the presiding judge, who has a casting-vote, in case of an equal division among his brethren. The opinion of the President was unfavourable to Lord Traquair; and the point was, therefore, to keep him out of the way, when the question should be tried. In this dilemma, the Earl had recourse to Christie's Will; who, at once, offered his service to kidnap the President. Upon due scrutiny, he found it was the judge's practice frequently to take the air, on horseback, on the sands of Leith, without an attendant. In one of these excursions, Christie's Will, who had long watched his opportunity, ventured to accost the President, and engage him in conversation. His address and language were so amusing, that he decoyed the President into an unfrequented and furzy common, called the Frigate Whins, where, riding suddenly up to him, he pulled him from his horse, muffled him in a large cloak, which he had provided, and rode off, with the luckless judge trussed up behind him. Will crossed the country with great expedition, by paths only known to persons of his description, and deposited his weary and terrified burden in an old castle, in Annandale, called the Tower of Graham.[1] The judge's horse being found, it was concluded he had thrown his rider into the sea; his friends went into mourning, and a successor was appointed to his office. Meanwhile, the poor President spent a heavy time in the vault of the castle. He was imprisoned, and solitary; receiving his food through an aperture in the wall, and never hearing the

[1] It stands upon the water of Dryfe, not far from Moffat.

sound of a human voice, save when a shepherd called his dog, by the name of *Batty*, and when a female domestic called upon *Maudge*, the cat. These, he concluded, were invocations of spirits; for he held himself to be in the dungeon of a sorcerer. At length, after three months had elapsed, the lawsuit was decided in favour of Lord Traquair; and Will was directed to set the President at liberty. Accordingly, he entered the vault, at dead of night, seized the President, muffled him once more in the cloak, without speaking a single word, and, using the same mode of transportation, conveyed him to Leith Sands, and set down the astonished judge on the very spot where he had taken him up. The joy of his friends, and the less agreeable surprise of his successor, may be easily conceived, when he appeared in court, to reclaim his office and honours. All embraced his own persuasion, that he had been spirited way by witchcraft; nor could he himself be convinced of the contrary, until, many years afterwards, happening to travel in Annandale, his ears were saluted, once more with the sounds of *Maudge* and *Batty*— the only notes which had solaced his long confinement. This led to a discovery of the whole story; but, in these disorderly times, it was only laughed at, as a fair *ruse de guerre*.

Wild and strange as this tradition may seem, there is little doubt of its foundation in fact. The judge, upon whose person this extraordinary stratagem was practised, was Sir Alexander Gibson, Lord Durie, Collector of the Reports, well known in the Scottish law, under the title of *Durie's Decisions*. He was advanced to the station of an ordinary Lord of Session, 10th July 1621, and died, at his own

house of Durie, July 1646.[1] Betwixt these periods this whimsical adventure must have happened; a date which corresponds with that of the tradition.

'We may frame,' says Forbes, 'a rational conjecture of his great learning and parts, not only from his collection of the Decisions of the Session, from July 1621, till July 1642, but also from the following circumstances: 1. In a tract of more than twenty years, he was frequently chosen vice-president, and no other lord in that time. 2. 'Tis commonly reported, that some party, in a considerable action before the Session, finding that the Lord Durie could not be persuaded to think his plea good, fell upon a stratagem to prevent the influence and weight which his lordship might have to his prejudice, by causing some strong masked men kidnap him, in the Links of Leith, at his diversion on a Saturday afternoon, and transport him to some blind and obscure room in the country, where he was detained captive, without the benefit of daylight, a matter of three months (though otherwise civilly and well entertained); during which time his lady and children went in mourning for him, as dead. But after the cause aforesaid was decided, the Lord Durie was carried back by incognitos, and dropt in the same place where he had been taken up.'—Forbes's *Journal of the Session*, Edin. 1714. *Preface*, p. 28.

Tradition ascribes to Christie's Will another memorable feat, which seems worthy of being recorded. It is well known, that, during the

[1] [Durie died 10th June 1644. As he was twice chosen President—in June 1642, and for the winter session of 1643—the capture celebrated in the ballad must have happened in one or other of those years.]

troubles of Charles I., the Earl of Traquair continued unalterably fixed in his attachment to his unfortunate master, in whose service he hazarded his person, and impoverished his estate. It was of consequence, it is said, to the King's service, that a certain packet, containing papers of importance, should be transmitted to him from Scotland. But the task was a difficult one, as the Parliamentary leaders used their utmost endeavours to prevent any communication betwixt the King and his Scottish friends. Traquair, in this strait, again had recourse to the services of Christie's Will; who undertook the commission, conveyed the papers safely to his Majesty, and received an answer, to be delivered to Lord Traquair. But, in the meantime, his embassy had taken air, and Cromwell had despatched orders to intercept him at Carlisle. Christie's Will, unconscious of his danger, halted in the town to refresh his horse, and then pursued his journey. But, as soon as he began to pass the long, high, and narrow bridge, which crosses the Eden at Carlisle, either end of the pass was occupied by a party of Parliamentary soldiers, who were lying in wait for him. The Borderer disdained to resign his enterprise, even in these desperate circumstances; and at once forming his resolution, spurred his horse over the parapet. The river was in high flood. Will sunk—the soldiers shouted—he emerged again, and guiding his horse to a steep bank, called the Stanners, or Stanhouse, endeavoured to land, but ineffectually, owing to his heavy horseman's cloak, now drenched in water. Will cut the loop, and the horse, feeling himself disembarrassed, made a desperate exertion, and succeeded in gaining the

bank. Our hero set off, at full speed, pursued by the troopers, who had for a time stood motionless in astonishment at his temerity. Will, however, was well mounted; and, having got the start, he kept it, menacing, with his pistols, any pursuer who seemed likely to gain on him—an artifice which succeeded, although the arms were wet and useless. He was chased to the river Esk, which he swam without hesitation; and, finding himself on Scottish ground, and in the neighbourhood of friends, he turned on the northern bank, and, in the true spirit of a Border rider, invited his followers to come through, and drink with him. After this taunt, he proceeded on his journey, and faithfully accomplished his mission. Such were the exploits of the very last Border freebooter of any note.

The reader is not to regard the ballad as of genuine and unmixed antiquity, though some stanzas are current upon the Border, in a corrupted state. They have been eked and joined together, in the rude and ludicrous manner of the original; but as it is to be considered as, on the whole, a modern ballad, it is transferred to this department of the work.

CHRISTIE'S WILL

I

Traquair has ridden up Chapelhope,
And sae has he down by the Grey Mare's Tail;
He never stinted the light gallop,
Until he speer'd for Christie's Will.

II

Now Christie's Will peep'd frae the tower,
And out at the shot-hole keekèd he;
'And ever unlucky,' quo' he, 'is the hour,
That the Warden comes to speer for me!'

III

'Good Christie's Will, now, have nae fear!
Nae harm, good Will, shall hap to thee:
I saved thy life at the Jeddart air,[1]
At the Jeddart air frae the justice tree.'

IV

'Bethink how ye sware, by the salt and the bread,[2]
By the lightning, the wind, and the rain,
That if ever of Christie's Will I had need,
He would pay me my service again.'

[1] [*Air*, Circuit-court.] [2] 'He took bread and salt, by this light, that he would never open his lips.'—*The Honest Whore*, Act v. Sc. 2.

v

'Gramercy, my lord,' quo' Christie's Will,
'Gramercy, my lord, for your grace to me!
When I turn my cheek, and claw my neck,
I think of Traquair, and the Jeddart tree.'

VI

And he has opened the fair tower yate,
To Traquair and a' his companie;
The spule o' the deer on the board he has set,
The fattest that ran on the Hutton Lee.

VII

'Now, wherefore sit ye sad, my lord?
And wherefore sit ye mournfullie?
And why eat ye not of the venison I shot,
At the dead of night, on Hutton Lee?'

VIII

'O weel may I stint of feast and sport,
And in my mind be vexèd sair!
A vote of the canker'd Session Court,
Of land and living will make me bare.

IX

'But if auld Durie to heaven were flown,
Or if auld Durie to hell were gane,
Or . . . if he could be but ten days stown . . .
My bonny braid lands would still be my ain.'

X

'O, mony a time, my lord,' he said,
I 've stown the horse frae the sleeping loon;
But for you I 'll steal a beast as braid,
For I'll steal Lord Durie frae Edinburgh toon.

XI

'O mony a time, my lord,' he said,
'I 've stown a kiss frae a sleeping wench;
But for you I 'll do as kittle a deed,
For I 'll steal an auld lurdane aff the bench.'

XII

And Christie's Will is to Edinburgh gane;
At the Borough Muir then enter'd he;
And as he pass'd the gallow-stane,
He cross'd his brow, and he bent his knee.

XIII

He lighted at Lord Durie's door,
And there he knock'd most manfullie;
And up and spake Lord Durie sae stour,
'What tidings, thou stalward groom, to me?'

XIV

'The fairest lady in Teviotdale
Has sent, maist reverent sir, for thee;
She pleas at the Session for her land, a' haill,
And fain she wad plead her cause to thee.'

XV

'But how can I to that lady ride,
With saving of my dignitie?'
'O a curch and mantle ye may wear,
And in my cloak ye sall mufflèd be.'

XVI

Wi' curch on head, and cloak ower face,
He mounted the judge on a palfrey fyne;
He rode away, a right round pace,
And Christie's Will held the bridle reyn.

XVII

The Lothian Edge they were not o'er,
When they heard bugles bauldly ring,
And, hunting over Middleton Moor,[1]
They met, I ween, our noble King.

XVIII

When Willie look'd upon our King,
I wot a frighted man was he!
But ever auld Durie was startled mair,
For tyning of his dignitie.

XIX

The King he cross'd himself, I wis,
When as the pair came riding bye—
'An uglier crone, and a sturdier loon,
I think, were never seen with eye!'

[1] Middleton Moor is about fifteen miles from Edinburgh on the way to the Border.

XX

Willie has hied to the tower of Græme,
He took auld Durie on his back,
He shot him down to the dungeon deep,
Which garr'd his auld banes gie mony a crack.

XXI

For nineteen days, and nineteen nights,
Of sun, or moon, or midnight stern,
Auld Durie never saw a blink,
The lodging was sae dark and dern.

XXII

He thought the warlocks o' the rosy cross
Had fang'd him in their nets sae fast;
Or that the gypsies' glamour'd gang
Had lair'd[1] his learning at the last.

XXIII

'Hey! Batty, lad! far yaud! far yaud!'[2]
These were the morning sounds heard he;
And ever 'Alack!' auld Durie cried,
'The deil is hounding his tykes on me!'

XXIV

And whiles a voice on *Baudrons* cried,
With sound uncouth, and sharp, and hie;

[1] *Lair'd*, bogged. [2] *Far yaud*, the signal made by a shepherd to his dog, when he is to drive away some sheep at a distance. From Yoden, to go. *Ang.-Sax.*

'I have tar-barrell'd mony a witch,
But now, I think, they 'll clear scores wi' me!'

XXV

The King has caused a bill be wrote,
And he has set it on the Tron,—
'He that will bring Lord Durie back,
Shall have five hundred merks and one.'

XXVI

Traquair has written a privie letter,
And he has seal'd it wi' his seal,—
'Ye may let the auld brock [1] out o' the poke;
The land 's my ain, and a 's gane weel.'

XXVII

O Will has mounted his bonny black,
And to the tower of Græme did trudge,
And once again on his sturdy back,
Has he hente up the weary judge.

XXVIII

He brought him to the council stairs,
And there full loudly shouted he,
'Gie me my guerdon, my sovereign liege,
And take ye back your auld Durie!'

[1] *Brock*, badger.

NOTES

ON

CHRISTIE'S WILL

Grey Mare's Tail.—St. i. l. 2.

A cataract above Moffat so called. [See the Introduction to the Second Canto of *Marmion* :—

> ' deep, deep down, and far within,
> Toils with the rocks the roaring linn ;
> Then, issuing forth one foaming wave,
> And wheeling round the Giant's Grave,
> White as the snowy charger's tail,
> Drives down the pass of Moffatdale,' etc.—J. G. L.]

[For an account by William Laidlaw of Scott's visit to the Grey Mare's Tail, see ' Abbotsford Notanda ' in Chambers's *Life of Scott* (1871), p. 135.]

He thought the warlocks o' the rosy cross.—St. xxii. l. 1.

' As for the rencounter betwixt Mr. Williamson, schoolmaster at Cowper (who has wrote a grammar), and the Rosicrucians, I never trusted it, till I heard it from his own son, who is present minister of Kirkaldy. He tells, that a stranger came to Cowper and called for him ; after they had drank a little, and the reckoning came to be paid, he whistled for spirits ; one, in the shape of a boy, came, and gave him gold in abundance ; no servant was seen riding with him to the town, nor enter with him into the inn. He caused his spirits, against next day, bring him noble Greek wine, from the Pope's cellar, and tell the freshest news then at Rome ; then trysted Mr. Williamson at London, who met the same man, in a

coach, near to London Bridge, and who called on him by his name; he marvelled to see any know him there; at last he found it was his Rosicrucian. He pointed to a tavern, and desired Mr. Williamson to do him the favour to dine with him at that house; whither he came at twelve o'clock, and found him, and many others of good fashion there, and a most splendid and magnificent table, furnished with all the varieties of delicate meats, where they are all served by spirits. At dinner, they debated upon the excellency of being attended by spirits; and, after dinner, they proposed to him to assume him into their society, and make him participant of their happy life; but, among the other conditions and qualifications requisite, this was one, that they demanded his abstracting his spirit from all materiality, and renouncing his baptismal engagements. Being amazed at this proposal, he falls a-praying; whereat they all disappear, and leave him alone. Then he began to forethink what would become of him, if he were left to pay that vast reckoning; not having as much on him as would defray it. He calls the boy, and asks, what was become of these gentlemen, and what was to pay? He answered, there was nothing to pay, for they had done it, and were gone about their affairs in the city.'—FOUNTAINHALL's *Decisions*, vol. i. p. 15. With great deference to the learned reporter, this story has all the appearance of a joke upon the poor schoolmaster, calculated at once to operate upon his credulity, and upon his fears of being left in pawn for the reckoning.

Or that the gypsies' glamour'd gang, etc.—St. xxii. l. 3.

Besides the prophetic powers, ascribed to the gypsies in most European countries, the Scottish peasants believe them possessed of the power of throwing upon by-standers a spell, to fascinate their eyes, and cause them to see the thing that is not. Thus, in the old ballad of 'Johnie Faa,' the elopement of the Countess of Cassillis, with a gypsy leader, is imputed to fascination:—

> 'As sune as they saw her weel-far'd face,
> They cast the *glamour* ower her.'

Saxo Grammaticus mentions a particular sect of *Mathematicians*, as he is pleased to call them, who '*per summam ludificandorum oculorum peritiam, proprios alienosque vultus, variis rerum imaginibus, adumbrare callebant; illicibusque formis veros obscurare conspectus.*' Merlin, the son of Ambrose, was particularly skilled in this art, and displays it often in the old metrical romance of *Arthour and Merlin* :—

'Tho' thai com the Kinges neighe
Merlin hef his heued on heighe
And kest on hem enchauntement
That he hem alle allmest blent
That none other sen no might
A gret while y you plight,' etc.

The *jongleurs* were also great professors of this mystery, which has in some degree descended, with their name, on the modern jugglers. But durst Breslaw, the Sieur Boaz, or Katterfelto himself, have encountered, in a magical sleight, the *tragetoures* of Father Chaucer, who

'within a hall large
Have made come in a water and a barge,
And in the halle rowen up and down;
Somtime hath semed come a grim leoun,
And somtime flowres spring as in a mede;
Somtime a vine and grapes white and rede,
Somtime a castel al of lime and ston;
And when hem liketh voideth it anon.
Thus seemeth it to every mannes sight.'—
Frankeleene's Tale.

And, again, the prodigies exhibited by the clerk of Orleans to Aurelius :—

'He shewd him or they went to soupere
Forestes, parkes, ful of wilde dere;
Ther saw he hartes with hir hornes hie,
The gretest that were ever seen with eie:
He saw of them an hundred slain with houndes,
And some with arwes blede of bitter woundes:
He saw, when voided were the wilde dere,
Thise fauconers upon a fair rivere,

That with hir haukes han the heron slain:
Tho saw he knightes justen on a plain;
And after this he did him swiche pleasance,
That he him shewd his lady on a dance,
On which himselven danced, as him thought:
And whan this maister that this magike wrought,
Saw it was time, he clapt his handes two,
And farewell! all the revel is ago.
And yet remued they never out of the house,
While they saw all thise sights merveillous:
But in his studie ther his bookes be,
They saten still and no wight but this three.'

Ibidem.

Our modern professors of the *magic natural* would likewise have been sorely put down by the *Jogulours* and *Enchantours* of the *Grete Chan*; 'for they maken to come in the air the sone and the mone, beseminge to every mannes sight; and aftre, they maken the nyght so dirke, that no man may se no thing; and aftre, they maken the day to come agen, fair and plesant, with bright sone to every mannes sight; and than, they bringin in daunces of the fairest damyselles of the world, and richest arrayed; and aftre, they maken to comen in other damyselles, bringing coupes of gold, fulle of mylke of diverse bestes; and geven drinke to lordes and to ladyes; and than they maken knyghtes to justen in armes fulle lustyly; and they rennen togidre a gret randoun, and they frusschen togidre full fiercely, and they broken her speres so rudely, that the trenchouns flen in sprotis and pieces alle aboute the halle; and than they make to come in hunting for the hert and for the boor, with houndes renning with open mouthe: and many other things they dow of her enchauntements, that it is marveyle for to se.'—Sir John Mandeville's *Travels*, p. 285. I question much, also, if the most artful *illuminatus* of Germany could have matched the prodigies exhibited by Pacolet and Adramain. '*Adonc Adramain leva une cappe par dessus un pillier, et en telle sorte, qu'il sembla a ceux qui furent presens, que parmi la place couroit une riviere fort grande et terrible. Et en*

icelle riviere sembloit avoir poissons en grand abondance, grands et petits. Et quand ceux de palais virent l'eau si grande, ils commencerent tous a lever leur robes et a crier fort, comme sils eussens eu peur d'estre noye; et Pacolet, qui l'enchantement regarda, commenca a chanter, et fit un sort si subtil en son chant qui sembla a tous ceux de lieu que parmy la riviere couroit un cerf grand et cornu, qui jettoit et abbatoit a terre tout ce que devant lui trouvoit, puis leur fut advis que voyoyent chasseurs et veneurs courir apris le Cerf, avec grande puissance de levriers et des chiens. Lors y eut plusieurs de la campagnie qui saillirent au devant pour le Cerf attraper et cuyder prendre; mais Pacolet fist tost le Cerf sailler. 'Bien avez joué,' dit Orson, 'et bien scavez vostre art user.'—L'Histoire des Valentin et Orson, à Rouen, 1631. The receipt to prevent the operation of these deceptions, was, to use a sprig of four-leaved clover. I remember to have heard (certainly very long ago, for, at that time, I believed the legend), that a gypsy exercised his *glamour* over a number of people at Haddington, to whom he exhibited a common dunghill cock, trailing, what appeared to the spectators, a massy oaken trunk. An old man passed with a cart of clover; he stopped, and picked out a four-leaved blade; the eyes of the spectators were opened, and the oaken trunk appeared to be a bulrush.

I have tar-barrell'd mony a witch.—St. xxiv. l. 3.

Human nature shrinks from the brutal scenes produced by the belief in witchcraft. Under the idea that the devil imprinted upon the body of his miserable vassals a mark, which was insensible to pain, persons were employed to run needles into the bodies of the old women who were suspected of witchcraft. In the dawning of common sense upon this subject, a complaint was made before the Privy Council of Scotland, 11th September 1678, by Catherine Liddell, a poor woman, against the Baron-bailie of Preston-Grange, and David Cowan (a professed pricker), for having imprisoned, and most cruelly tortured her. They answered, 1st, She was

searched by her own consent, *et volenti non fit injuria*; 2d, The pricker had learned his trade from Kincaid, a famed pricker; 3d, He never acted, but when called upon by magistrates or clergymen, so what he did was *auctore prætore*; 4th, His trade was lawful; 5th, Perkins, Delrio, and all divines and lawyers, who treat of witchcraft, assert the existence of the marks, or *stigmata sagarum*; and, 6thly, Were it otherwise, *Error communis facit jus.*—Answered, 1st, Denies consent; 2d, Nobody can validly consent to their own torture; for, *Nemo est dominus membrorum suorum*; 3d, The pricker was a common cheat. The last arguments prevailed; and it was found that inferior 'judges might not use any torture, by pricking, or by withholding them from sleep'; the council reserving all that to themselves, the justices, and those acting by commission from them. But Lord Durie, a Lord of Session, could have no share in such inflictions.

THOMAS THE RHYMER

IN THREE PARTS

PART FIRST.—ANCIENT

Few personages are so renowned in tradition as Thomas of Ercildoune, known by the appellation of *The Rhymer*. Uniting, or supposed to unite, in his person, the powers of poetical composition, and of vaticination, his memory, even after the lapse of five hundred years, is regarded with veneration by his countrymen. To give anything like a certain history of this remarkable man would be indeed difficult; but the curious may derive some satisfaction from the particulars here brought together.

It is agreed on all hands, that the residence, and probably the birth-place, of this ancient bard, was Ercildoune, a village situated upon the Leader, two miles above its junction with the Tweed. The ruins of an ancient tower are still pointed out as the Rhymer's castle. The uniform tradition bears, that his sirname was Lermont, or Learmont;[1] and that the appellation of *The Rhymer* was conferred on him in consequence of his poetical compositions. There remains, nevertheless, some doubt upon this subject. In a charter, which is subjoined at length,[2]

[1] [The first to call him Learmont was the unreliable Hector Boece.]

[2] *From the Chartulary of the Trinity House of Soltra, Advocates' Library*, W. 4. 14.

ERSYLTON

Omnibus has literas visuris vel audituris Thomas de Ercildoun

the son of our poet designed himself 'Thomas of Ercildoun, son and heir of Thomas Rymour of Ercildoun,' which seems to imply, that the father did not bear the hereditary name of Learmont; or, at least, was better known and distinguished by the epithet, which he had acquired by his personal accomplishments. I must, however, remark, that, down to a very late period, the practice of distinguishing the parties, even in formal writings, by the epithets which had been bestowed on them from personal circumstances, instead of the proper sirnames of their families, was common, and indeed necessary, among the Border clans. So early as the end of the thirteenth century, when sirnames were hardly introduced in Scotland, this custom must have been universal. There is, therefore, nothing inconsistent in supposing our poet's name to have been actually Learmont, although, in this charter, he is distinguished by the popular appellation of *The Rhymer*.

We are better able to ascertain the period at which Thomas of Ercildoune lived, being the latter end of the thirteenth century. I am inclined to place

filius et heres Thomæ Rymour de Ercildoun salutem in Domino. Noveritis me per fustem et baculum in pleno judicio resignasse ac per presentes quietem clamasse pro me et heredibus meis Magistro domus Sanctæ Trinitatis de Soltre et fratribus ejusdem domus totam terram meam cum omnibus pertinentibus suis quam in tenemento de Ercildoun hereditarie tenui renunciando de toto pro me et heredibus meis omni jure et clameo que ego seu antecessores mei in eadem terra alioque tempore de perpetua habuimus sive de futuro habere possumus. In cujus rei testimonio presentibus his sigillum meum apposui data apud Ercildoun die Martis proximo post festum Sanctorum Apostolorum Symonis et Jude Anno Domini Millessimo cc. Nonagesimo Nono. [But see Dr. Murray's Introduction to the romance of *Thomas of Erceldoune*, pp. x-xi, who shows that the date is 2nd November 1294.]

his death a little farther back than Mr. Pinkerton, who supposes that he was alive in 1300 (*List of Scottish Poets*), which is hardly, I think, consistent with the charter already quoted, by which his son, in 1299,[1] for himself and his heirs, conveys to the convent of the Trinity of Soltra, the tenement which he possessed by inheritance (*hereditarie*) in Ercildoune, with all claim which he, or his predecessors, could pretend thereto. From this we may infer that the Rhymer was now dead, since we find his son disposing of the family property. Still, however, the argument of the learned historian will remain unimpeached as to the time of the poet's birth. For if, as we learn from Barbour, his prophecies were held in reputation[2] as early as 1306, when Bruce slew the Red Cummin, the sanctity, and (let me add to Mr. Pinkerton's words) the uncertainty of antiquity, must have already involved his character and writings. In a charter of Peter de Haga de Bemersyde, which unfortunately wants a date, the Rhymer, a near neighbour, and, if we may trust tradition, a friend of the family, appears as a witness.—*Chartulary of Melrose.*[3]

It cannot be doubted, that Thomas of Ercildoune was a remarkable and important person in his own time, since, very shortly after his death, we find him celebrated as a prophet and as a poet. Whether he himself made any pretensions to the first of these characters, or whether it was gratuitously conferred

[1] [In 1294. See previous note.]

[2] The lines alluded to are these:—

> 'I hope that Thomas's prophesie,
> Of Erceldoun, shall truly be,
> In him,' etc.

[3] [It must have been *c.* 1240-1280. See Russell's *Haigs of Bemersyde*, pp. 68-69, where it is given in facsimile.]

upon him by the credulity of posterity, it seems difficult to decide. If we may believe Mackenzie, Learmont only versified the prophecies delivered by Eliza, an inspired nun, of a convent at Haddington. But of this there seems not to be the most distant proof. On the contrary, all ancient authors, who quote the Rhymer's prophecies, uniformly suppose them to have been emitted by himself. Thus, in Wintoun's *Chronicle* :—

> 'Of this fycht quilum spak Thomas
> Of Ersyldoune, that sayd in derne,
> Thare suld meit stalwartly, starke and sterne.
> He sayd it in his prophecy;
> But how he wist it was *ferly*.'
>
> Book viii. chap. 32.

There could have been no *ferly* (marvel), in Wintoun's eyes at least, how Thomas came by his knowledge of future events, had he ever heard of the inspired nun of Haddington, which, it cannot be doubted, would have been a solution of the mystery, much to the taste of the Prior of Lochleven.[1]

Whatever doubts, however, the learned might have, as to the source of the Rhymer's prophetic skill,

[1] Henry the Minstrel, who introduces Thomas into the history of Wallace, expresses the same doubt as to the source of his prophetic knowledge:—

> 'Thomas Rhymer into the faile was than
> With the minister, which was a worthy man.
> He used oft to that religious place;
> The people deemed of wit he meikle can,
> And so he told, though that they bless or ban,
> In rule of war whether they tint or wan:
> Which happened sooth in many divers case;
> I cannot say by wrong or righteousness.
> It may be deemed by division of grace,' etc.
>
> *History of Wallace*, Book ii.

the vulgar had no hesitation to ascribe the whole to the intercourse between the bard and the Queen of Faëry. The popular tale bears, that Thomas was carried off, at an early age, to the Fairy Land, where he acquired all the knowledge, which made him afterwards so famous. After seven years' residence, he was permitted to return to the earth, to enlighten and astonish his countrymen by his prophetic powers; still, however, remaining bound to return to his royal mistress, when she should intimate her pleasure.[1] Accordingly, while Thomas was making merry with his friends, in the Tower of Ercildoune, a person came running in, and told, with marks of fear and astonishment, that a hart and hind had left the neighbouring forest, and were, composedly and slowly, parading the street of the village.[2] The prophet instantly arose, left his habitation, and followed the wonderful animals to the forest, whence he was never seen to return. According to the popular belief, he still 'drees his weird' in Fairy Land, and is one day expected to revisit earth. In the meanwhile, his memory is held in the most profound respect. The Eildon Tree, from beneath the shade of which he delivered his prophecies, now no longer exists; but the spot is marked by a large stone, called Eildon Tree Stone. A neighbouring rivulet takes the name of the Bogle Burn (Goblin Brook) from the Rhymer's supernatural visitants. The veneration paid to his dwelling-place even attached itself in some degree

[1] See the Dissertation on Fairies, prefixed to *Tamlane*, vol. ii. p. 300.

[2] There is a singular resemblance betwixt this tradition and an incident occurring in the life of Merlin Caledonius, which the reader will find a few pages onwards.

to a person, who, within the memory of man, chose to set up his residence in the ruins of Learmont's Tower. The name of this man was Murray, a kind of herbalist; who, by dint of some knowledge in simples, the possession of a musical clock, an electrical machine, and a stuffed alligator, added to a supposed communication with Thomas the Rhymer, lived for many years in very good credit as a wizard.[1]

It seemed to the Editor unpardonable to dismiss a person so important in Border tradition as the Rhymer, without some further notice than a simple commentary upon the following ballad. It is given from a copy, obtained from a lady, residing not far from Ercildoune, corrected and enlarged by one in Mrs. Brown's MSS. The former copy, however, as might be expected, is far more minute as to local description. To this old tale the Editor has ventured to add a Second Part, consisting of a kind of Cento, from the printed prophecies vulgarly ascribed to the Rhymer; and a Third Part, entirely modern, founded upon the tradition of his having returned, with the hart and hind, to the Land of Faërie. To make his peace with the more severe antiquaries, the Editor has prefixed to the Second Part some remarks on Learmont's prophecies.

[The *Minstrelsy* version differs a good deal in phraseology from that in Mrs. Brown's MSS. The latter makes no reference to 'Huntlie bank,' the first line reading:—

'True Thomas lay o'er yond grassy bank.'

[1] [Murray, as Robert Chambers (*Popular Rhymes of Scotland*) has shown, was really a medical practitioner of good family, who possessed the Rhymer's Tower, and other property, but made no attempt to trade on the credulity of any one.]

There is also some difference in the arrangement. Stanzas xv., xvi., and xvii. contain the substance of stanzas vii. and viii. in Mrs. Brown's version, and something more. Stanza vii. in Mrs. Brown's version reads :—

'For forty days, and forty nights,
He wade through red blude to the knee ;
And he saw neither sun nor moon,
But heard the raging of the sea.'

The last couplet of stanza viii. reads :—

'Light down, light down, ye ladie free,
Some of the fruit let me pull to thee.'

And it is followed by the following two stanzas omitted in the *Minstrelsy* version :—

'"O no, O no, true Thomas," she says,
"That fruit maun not be touched by thee,
For a' the plagues that are in hell,
Light on the fruit of this countrie.

'"But I have a loaf here in my lap,
Like wine, a bottle of claret wine ;
And now, ere we go farther on,
We'll rest a while, and ye may dine."

The version 'obtained from a lady' has apparently not been preserved ; but at Abbotsford there is a fragmentary recitation obtained by Leyden, and another version obtained in 1806. Mrs. Brown's copy has nothing corresponding to stanzas xviii.-xix.]

THOMAS THE RHYMER

PART FIRST

ANCIENT

I

TRUE Thomas lay on Huntlie bank;
A ferlie he spied wi' his ee;
And there he saw a ladye bright,
Come riding down by the Eildon Tree.

II

Her shirt was o' the grass-green silk,
Her mantle o' the velvet fyne;
At ilka tett of her horse's mane,
Hang fifty siller bells and nine.

III

True Thomas, he pull'd aff his cap,
And louted low down to his knee,
'All hail, thou mighty Queen of Heaven!
For thy peer on earth I never did see.'

IV

'O no, O no, Thomas,' she said;
'That name does not belang to me;
I am but the Queen of fair Elfland,
That am hither come to visit thee.

V

'Harp and carp, Thomas,' she said;
'Harp and carp along wi' me;
And if ye dare to kiss my lips,
Sure of your bodie I will be.'

VI

'Betide me weal, betide me woe,
That weird[1] shall never daunton me.'
Syne he has kissed her rosy lips,
All underneath the Eildon Tree.

VII

'Now, ye maun go wi' me,' she said;
'True Thomas, ye maun go wi' me;
And ye maun serve me seven years,
Thro' weal or woe as may chance to be.'

VIII

She mounted on her milk-white steed;
She 's ta'en true Thomas up behind:
And aye, whene'er her bridle rung,
The steed flew swifter than the wind.

IX

O they rade on, and farther on;
The steed gaed swifter than the wind;

[1] *That weird, etc.*—That destiny shall never frighten me.

Until they reached a desert wide,
And living land was left behind.

X

'Light down, light down, now, true Thomas,
And lean your head upon my knee:
Abide and rest a little space,
And I will show you ferlies three.

XI

'O see ye not yon narrow road,
So thick beset with thorns and briers?
That is the path of righteousness,
Though after it but few inquires.

XII

'And see not ye that braid braid road,
That lies across that lily leven?
That is the path of wickedness,
Though some call it the road to Heaven.

XIII

'And see not ye that bonny road,
That winds about the fernie brae?
That is the road to fair Elfland,
Where thou and I this night maun gae.

XIV

'But, Thomas, ye maun hold your tongue,
Whatever ye may hear or see;

For, if you speak word in Elflyn land,
Ye 'll ne'er get back to your ain countrie.'

XV

O they rade on, and farther on,
And they waded through rivers aboon the knee,
And they saw neither sun nor moon,
But they heard the roaring of the sea.

XVI

It was mirk mirk night, and there was nae stern light,
And they waded through red blude to the knee;
For a' the blude, that 's shed on earth,
Rins through the springs o' that countrie.

XVII

Syne they came on to a garden green,
And she pu'd an apple frae a tree—
'Take this for thy wages, true Thomas;
It will give thee the tongue that can never lie.'

XVIII

'My tongue is mine ain,' true Thomas said;
'A gudely gift ye wad gie to me!
I neither dought to buy nor sell,
At fair or tryst where I may be.

XIX

'I dought neither speak to prince or peer,
Nor ask of grace from fair ladye.'
'Now hold thy peace!' the lady said,
'For as I say, so must it be.'

XX

He has gotten a coat of the even cloth,
And a pair of shoes of velvet green;
And, till seven years were gane and past,
True Thomas on earth was never seen.

NOTES AND APPENDIX

TO

THOMAS THE RHYMER

PART FIRST

True Thomas lay on Huntlie bank.—St. i. l. 1.

[Huntly Bank, and the adjoining ravine, called, from immemorial tradition, *the Rhymer's Glen*, were ultimately included in the domain of Abbotsford. The scenery of this glen forms the background of Edwin Landseer's portrait of Sir Walter Scott painted in 1833.—J. G. L.]

And she pu'd an apple frae a tree, etc.—St. xvii. l. 2.

The traditional commentary upon this ballad informs us, that the apple was the produce of the fatal Tree of Knowledge, and that the garden was the terrestrial paradise. The repugnance of Thomas to be debarred the use of falsehood, when he might find it convenient, has a comic effect.

APPENDIX

The reader is here presented, from an old, and unfortunately an imperfect MS., with the undoubted original of Thomas the Rhymer's intrigue with the Queen of Faëry. It will afford great amusement to those who would study the nature of traditional poetry, and the changes effected by oral tradition, to compare this ancient romance with the foregoing ballad. The same incidents are narrated, even the expression is often the same; yet the poems are as different in appearance, as if the older

tale had been regularly and systematically modernised by a poet of the present day.[1]

Incipit Prophesia Thomæ de Erseldoun.

In a lande as I was lent,
In the gryking of the day,
Ay alone as I went,
In Huntle bankys me for to play:
I saw the throstyl, and the jay,
Ye mawes movyde of her song,
Ye wodwale sange notes gay,
That al the wod about range.
In that longyng as I lay,
Undir nethe a dern tre,
I was war of a lady gay,
Come rydyng ouyr a fair le;
Zogh I suld sitt to domysday,
With my tong to wrabbe and wry,
Certenly all hyr aray,
It beth neuyer discryuyd for me.
Hyr palfra was dappyll gray,
Sycke on say neuer none,
As the son in somers day,
All abowte that lady schone.
Hyr sadyl was of a rewel bone,
A semly syght it was to se,
Bryht with mony a precyous stone,
And compasyd all with crapste;
Stones of oryens gret plente,
Her hair about her hede it hang,
She rode ouer the farnyle.
A while she blew, a while she sang,
Her girths of nobil silke they were,
Her boculs were of beryl stone,
Sadyll and brydil war . . .:
With sylk and sendel about bedone,
Hyr payetreyl was of a pall fyne,
And hyr croper of the arase,
Her brydil was of gold fyne,
On euery syde forsothe hong bells thre,
Her brydil reynes . . .
A semly syzt . . .

[1] [The latter hypothesis is not improbable.]

Crop and payetreyl . . .
In every joynt . . .
She led thre grew houndes in a leash,
And ratches cowpled by her ran;
She bar an horn about her halse,
And undir her gyrdil mene flene.
Thomas lay and sa . . .
In the bankes of . . .
He sayd Yonder is Mary of Might,
That bar the child that died for me,
Certes bot I may speke with that lady bright,
Myd my hert will breke in three;
I schal me hye with all my might,
Hyr to mete at Eldyn Tree.
Thomas rathly up her rase,
And ran ouer mountayn hye,
If it be sothe the story says,
He met her euyn at Eldyn Tre.
Thomas knelyd down on his kne
Undir nethe the grenewood spray,
And sayd, Lovely lady, thou rue on me,
Queen of Heaven as you well may be.
But I am a lady of another countrie,
If I be pareld most of prise,
I ride after the wild fee,
My ratches rinnen at my devys.
If thou be pareld most of prise,
And rides a lady in strang foly,
Lovely lady, as thou art wise,
Giue you me leue to lige ye by.
Do way, Thomas, that were foly,
I pray ye, Thomas, late me be,
That sin will fordo all my bewtie.
Lovely ladye, rewe on me,
And euer more I shall with ye dwell,
Here my trowth I plyght to thee,
Where you belieues in heuin or hell.
Thomas, and you myght lyge me by,
Undir nethe this grene wode spray,
Thou would tell full hastely,
That thou had layn by a lady gay.
Lady, mote I lyg by the,
Under nethe the grene wode tre,
For all the gold in chrystenty,
Suld you neuer be wryede for me.
Man on molde you will me marre,

And yet bot you may haf your will,
Trow you well, Thomas, you cheuyst ye warre;
For all my bewtie wilt you spill.
Down lyghtyd that lady bryzt,
Undir nethe the grene wode spray,
And as ye story sayth full ryzt,
Seuyen tymes by her he lay.
She sayd, Man, you lyste thi play,
What berde in bouyr may dele with thee,
That maries me all this long day;
I pray ye, Thomas, lat me be.
Thomas stode up in the stede,
And behelde the lady gay,
Her heyre hang down about hyr hede,
The tone was blak, the other gray,
Her eyn semyt onte before was gray,
Her gay clethyng was all away,
That he before had sene in that stede:
Hyr body as blow as ony bede.
Thomas sighede, and sayd, Allas,
Me thynke this a dullfull syght,
That thou art fadyd in the face,
Before you shone as son so bryzt.
Tak thy leue, Thomas, at son and mone,
At gresse, and at euery tre,
This twelmonth sall you with me gone,
Medyl erth you sall not se.
Alas, he seyd, ful wo is me,
I trow my dedes will werke me care,
Jesu, my sole tak to ye,
Whedir so euyr my body sal fare.
She rode furth with all her myzt,
Undir nethe the derne lee,
It was as derke as at mydnizt,
And euyr in water unto the kne;
Through the space of days thre,
He herde but swowyng of a flode;
Thomas sayd, Ful wo is me,
Now I spyll for fawte of fode;
To a garden she lede him tyte,
There was fruyte in grete plente,
Peyres and appless ther were rype,
The date and the damese,
The figge and als fylbert tre;
The nyghtyngale bredyng in her neste,
The papigaye about gan fle,

The throstylcok sang wold hafe no rest.
He pressed to pulle fruyt with his hand,
As man for faute that was faynt;
She sayd, Thomas, lat al stand,
Or els the deuyl wil the ataynt.
She sayd, Thomas, I the hyzt,
To lay thi hede upon my kne,
And thou shalt see fayrer syght,
Than euyr sawe man in their kintre.
Sees thou, Thomas, yon fayr way,
That lyggs ouyr yone fayr playn?
Yonder is the way to heuyn for ay,
Whan synful sawles haf derayed their payne.
Sees thou, Thomas, yon secund way,
That lygges lawe undir the ryse?
Streight is the way sothly to say,
To the joyes of paradyce.
Sees thou, Thomas, yon thyrd way,
That ligges ouyr yone how?
Wide is the way sothly to say,
To the brynyng fyres of hell.
Sees thou, Thomas, yone fayr castell,
That standes ouyr yone fair hill?
Of town and tower it beereth the belle,
In middell erth is none like theretill.
Whan thou comyst in yone castell gaye,
I pray thu curteis man to be;
What so any man to you say,
Loke thu answer none but me.
My lord is servyd at yche messe,
With xxx kniztes feir and fre;
I shall say syttyng on the dese,
I toke thy speche beyonde the sle.
Thomas stode as still as stone,
And behelde that ladye gaye;
Than was she fayr and ryche anone,
And also ryal on hir palfreye.
The grewhoundes had fylde thaim on the dere,
The raches coupled, by my fay,
She blewe her horn Thomas to chere,
To the castell she went her way.
The ladye into the hall went,
Thomas folowyd at her hand;
Thar kept her mony a lady gent,
With curtasy and lawe.
Harp and fedyl both he fande,

The getern and the sawtry,
Lut and rybid ther gon gan,
Thair was al maner of mynstralsy.
The most fertly that Thomas thoght,
When he com emyddes the flore,
Fourty hertes to quarry were broght,
That had ben befor both long and store.
Lymors lay lappyng blode,
And kokes standyng with dressyng knyfe,
And dressyd dere as thai wer wode,
And rewell was thair wonder.
Knyghtes dansyd by two and thre,
All that leue long day.
Ladyes that were gret of gre,
Sat and sang of ryche aray.
Thomas sawe much more in that place,
Than I can descryve,
Til on a day, alas, alas,
My lovelye ladye sayd to me,
Busk ye, Thomas, you must agayn,
Here you may no longer be:
Hy then zerne that you were at hame,
I sal ye bryng to Eldyn Tre.
Thomas answerd with heuy cher,
And sayd, Lowely ladye, lat me be,
For I say ye certenly here
Haf I be bot the space of dayes three.
Sothely, Thomas, as I telle ye,
You hath ben here thre yeres,
And here you may no longer be;
And I sal tele ye a skele,
To-morowe of hellë ye foule fende
Amang our folke shall chuse his fee;
For you art a larg man and an hende,
Trowe you wele he will chuse thee.
Fore all the golde that may be,
Fro hens unto the worldes ende,
Sall you not be betrayed by me,
And thairfor sall you hens wend,
She broght hym euyn to Eldyn Tre,
Undir nethe the grene wode spray,
In Huntle bankes was fayr to be,
Ther breddes syng both nyzt and day.
Ferre ouyr yon mountayns gray,
Ther hathe my facon;
Fare wele, Thomas, I wende my way.

* * * * *

The Elfin Queen, after restoring Thomas to earth, pours forth a string of prophecies, in which we distinguish references to the events and personages of the Scottish wars of Edward III. The battles of Duplin and Halidon are mentioned, and also Black Agnes, Countess of Dunbar. There is a copy of this poem in the museum in the cathedral of Lincoln, another in the collection in Peterborough, but unfortunately they are all in an imperfect state. Mr. Jamieson, in his curious Collection of Scottish Ballads and Songs, has an entire copy of this ancient poem, with all the collations. The *lacunæ* of the former editions have been supplied from his copy.

[The romance and prophecies have been edited for the English Text Society by Dr. J. A. H. Murray, 1875; and there is also an edition by A. Brandl, Berlin, 1880. The work cannot be of earlier date than 1400, and even if founded on an old Scottish romance, the story is of much earlier date than the time of Thomas of Ercildoune.

As for the so-called ancient ballad, it clearly derives from the MS., and its connection with it is probably of somewhat recent date. Little or no importance can attach to the fact that Scott obtained a copy from a lady residing near Ercildoune, for nothing is said as to how the lady obtained it.]

THOMAS THE RHYMER

PART SECOND

ALTERED FROM ANCIENT PROPHECIES

THE prophecies ascribed to Thomas of Ercildoune, have been the principal means of securing to him remembrance 'amongst the sons of his people.' The author of *Sir Tristrem* would long ago have joined, in the vale of oblivion, 'Clerk of Tranent, who wrote the adventure of *Schir Gawain*,' if, by good hap, the same current of ideas respecting antiquity, which causes Virgil to be regarded as a magician by the Lazaroni of Naples, had not exalted the bard of Ercildoune to the prophetic character. Perhaps, indeed, he himself affected it during his life. We know at least, for certain, that a belief in his supernatural knowledge was current soon after his death. His prophecies are alluded to by Barbour, by Wintoun, and by Henry the Minstrel, or *Blind Harry*, as he is usually termed. None of these authors, however, give the words of any of the Rhymer's vaticinations, but merely narrate, historically, his having predicted the events of which they speak. The earliest of the prophecies ascribed to him, which is now extant, is quoted by Mr. Pinkerton from a MS. It is supposed to be a response from Thomas of Ercildoune to a question from the heroic Countess of March, renowned for the defence of the castle of Dunbar against the English, and termed, in the

familiar dialect of her time, *Black Agnes* of Dunbar. This prophecy is remarkable, in so far as it bears very little resemblance to any verses published in the printed copy of the Rhymer's supposed prophecies. The verses are as follows:—

'*La Countesse de Donbar demande a Thomas de Essedoune quant la guerre d'Escoce prendreit fyn. E yl l'a repoundy et dyt,*

'When man is mad a kyng of a capped man;
When man is lever other mones thyng than is owen;
When londe thouys forest, ant forest is felde;
When hares kendles o' the her'stane;
When Wyt and Wille werres togedere:
When mon makes stables of kyrkes; and steles castels with stye;
When Rokesboroughe nys no burgh ant market is at Forwyleye;
When Bambourne is donged with dede men;
When men ledes men in ropes to buyen and to sellen;
When a quarter of whaty whete is chaunged for a colt of ten markes;
When prude (pride) prikes and pees is leyd in prisoun;
When a Scot ne me hym hude ase hare in forme that the English ne shall hym fynde:
When rycht ant wronge astente the togedere;
When laddes weddeth lovedies;
When Scottes flen so faste, that, for faute of shep, hy drowneth hemselve;
When shall this be?
Nouther in thine tyme ne in mine;
Ah comen ant gone
Withinne twenty winter ant one.'

PINKERTON'S *Poems, from* MAITLAND'S *MSS. quoting from Harl. Lib.* 2253. *F.* 127.

As I have never seen the MS. from which Mr. Pinkerton makes this extract, and as the date of it

is fixed by him (certainly one of the most able antiquaries of our age) to the reign of Edward I. or II., it is with great diffidence that I hazard a contrary opinion. There can, however, I believe, be little doubt that these prophetic verses are a forgery, and not the production of our Thomas the Rhymer. But I am inclined to believe them of a later date than the reign of Edward I. or II.

The gallant defence of the castle of Dunbar, by Black Agnes, took place in the year 1337. The Rhymer died previous to the year 1299 (see the charter, by his son, in the introduction to the foregoing ballad). It seems, therefore, very improbable that the Countess of Dunbar could ever have an opportunity of consulting Thomas the Rhymer, since that would infer that she was married, or at least engaged in state matters, previous to 1299; whereas she is described as a young, or a middle-aged woman, at the period of her being besieged in the fortress, which she so well defended. If the Editor might indulge a conjecture, he would suppose that the prophecy was contrived for the encouragement of the English invaders, during the Scottish wars; and that the names of the Countess of Dunbar, and of Thomas of Ercildoune, were used for the greater credit of the forgery. According to his hypothesis, it seems likely to have been composed after the siege of Dunbar, which had made the name of the Countess well known, and consequently in the reign of Edward III.[1] The whole tendency of the prophecy is to aver, that there shall be no end of the

[1] [The prediction was written some time before 1320, and the Countess of Dunbar, who asks the information, could not, therefore, have been Black Agnes (Dr. J. A. H. Murray's Introduction to the *Romance and Prophecies*, p. xix). In addition to this, it

Scottish war (concerning which the question was proposed), till a final conquest of the country by England, attended by all the usual severities of war. 'When the cultivated country shall become forest,' says the prophecy; 'when the wild animals shall inhabit the abode of men; when Scots shall not be able to escape the English, should they crouch as hares in their form'—all these denunciations seem to refer to the time of Edward III., upon whose victories the prediction was probably founded. The mention of the exchange betwixt a colt worth ten markes, and a quarter of 'whaty [indifferent] wheat,' seems to allude to the dreadful famine, about the year 1388. The independence of Scotland was, however, as impregnable to the mines of superstition as to the steel of our more powerful and more wealthy neighbours. The war of Scotland is, thank God, at an end; but it is ended without her people having either crouched like hares in their form, or being drowned in their flight 'for faute of ships,'—thank God for that too.—The prophecy, quoted in p. 82, is probably of the same date, and intended for the same purpose.

A minute search of the records of the time would, probably, throw additional light upon the illusions contained in these ancient legends. Among various rhymes of prophetic import, which are at this day current amongst the people of Teviotdale, is one, supposed to be pronounced by Thomas the

would be well known that Black Agnes was not a contemporary of the Rhymer. The Countess of Dunbar meant must have been the wife of Patrick, seventh earl, to whom the Rhymer is said to have predicted the death of Alexander III. Some suppose the forgery to have been circulated shortly before the battle of Bannockburn; which would make its professed date about 1293.]

Rhymer, presaging the destruction of his habitation and family:—

> 'The hare sall kittle (litter) on my hearth stane,
> And there will never be a Laird Learmont again.

The first of these lines is obviously borrowed from that in the MS. of the Harl. Library.—'When hares kendles o' the her'stane'—an emphatic image of desolation. It is also inaccurately quoted in the prophecy of Waldhave, published by Andro Hart, 1613:—

> 'This is a true talking that Thomas of tells,
> The hare shall hirple on the hard (hearth) stane.'

Spottiswoode, an honest, but credulous historian, seems to have been a firm believer in the authenticity of the prophetic wares, vended in the name of Thomas of Ercildoune. 'The prophecies, yet extant in Scottish rhymes, whereupon he was commonly called *Thomas the Rhymer*, may justly be admired; having foretold, so many ages before, the union of England and Scotland in the ninth degree of the Bruce's blood, with the succession of Bruce himself to the crown, being yet a child, and other divers particulars, which the event hath ratified and made good. Boethius, in his story, relateth his prediction of King Alexander's death, and that he did foretel the same to the Earl of March, the day before it fell out; saying, "That before the next day at noon, such a tempest should blow as Scotland had not felt for many years before." The next morning, the day being clear, and no change appearing in the air, the nobleman did challenge Thomas of his saying, calling him an impostor. He replied, that noon was not yet passed. About which

time, a post came to advertise the earl of the king his sudden death. "Then," said Thomas, "this is the tempest I foretold; and so it shall prove to Scotland." Whence, or how, he had this knowledge, can hardly be affirmed; but sure it is, that he did divine and answer truly of many things to come.'—SPOTTISWOODE, p. 47. Besides that notable voucher, Master Hector Boece, the good archbishop might, had he been so minded, have referred to Fordun for the prophecy of King Alexander's death.[1] That historian calls our bard '*ruralis ille vates.*'—FORDUN, lib. x. cap. 40.

What Spottiswoode calls 'the prophecies extant in Scottish rhyme,' are the metrical productions ascribed to the prophet of Ercildoune, which, with many other compositions of the same nature, bearing the names of Bede, Merlin, Gildas, and other approved soothsayers, are contained in one small volume, published by Andro Hart, at Edinburgh, 1615.[2] Nisbet the herald (who claims the prophet of Ercildoune as a brother-professor of his art, founding upon the various allegorical and emblematical allusions to heraldry) intimates the existence of some earlier copy of his prophecies than that of Andro Hart, which, however, he does not pretend to have seen.[3] The late excellent Lord Hailes

[1] [It is mentioned not by Fordun, but by Bower (*c.* 1430), the continuator of that historian.]

[2] [And reprinted by the Bannatyne Club in 1833.]

[3] 'The *muscle* is a square figure like a *lozenge*, but it is always voided of the *field*. They are carried as principal figures by the name of Learmont. Learmont of Earlstoun, in the Merss, carried *or* on a bend azure three muscles; of which family was Sir Thomas Learmont, who is well known by the name of Thomas the Rhymer, because he wrote his prophecies in rhime. This prophetick herauld lived in the days of King Alexander the Third, and prophesied of his death, and of many other remarkable

made these compositions the subject of a dissertation, published in his *Remarks on the History of Scotland.* His attention is chiefly directed to the celebrated prophecy of our bard, mentioned by

occurrences; particularly of the union of Scotland with England, which was not accomplished until the reign of James the Sixth, some hundred years after it was foretold by this gentleman, whose prophecies are much esteemed by many of the vulgar even at this day. I was promised by a friend a sight of his prophecies, of which there is everywhere to be had an epitome, which, I suppose, is erroneous, and differs in many things from the original, it having been oft reprinted by some unskilful persons. Thus many things are amissing in the small book which are to be met with in the original, particularly these two lines concerning his neighbour, Bemerside:—

> "Tyde what may betide,
> Haig shall be laird of Bemerside."

And indeed his prophecies concerning that ancient family have hitherto been true; for, since that time to this day, the Haigs have been lairds of that place. They carrie, Azure a saltier cantoned with two stars in chief and in base argent, as many crescents in the flanques or, and for crest a rock proper, with this motto, taken from the above-written rhime—"Tyde what may."'—NISBET on *Marks of Cadency*, p. 158. He adds, 'That Thomas' meaning may be understood by heralds when he speaks of kingdoms whose insignia seldom vary, but that individual families cannot be discovered, either because they have altered their bearings, or because they are pointed out by their crests and exterior ornaments, which are changed at the pleasure of the bearer.' Mr. Nisbet, however, comforts himself for this obscurity, by reflecting, that 'we may certainly conclude, from his writings, that herauldry was in good esteem in his days, and well known to the vulgar.'—*Ibid.*, p. 160. It may be added, that the publication of predictions, either printed or hieroglyphical, in which noble families were pointed out by their armorial bearings, was, in the time of Queen Elizabeth, extremely common; and the influence of such predictions on the minds of the common people was so great as to occasion a prohibition, by statute, of prophecy by reference to heraldric emblems. Lord Henry Howard also (afterwards Earl of Northampton) directs against this practice much of the reasoning in his learned treatise, entitled 'A Defensation against the Poyson of pretended Prophecies."

Bishop Spottiswoode, bearing, that the crowns of England and Scotland should be united in the person of a king, son of a French queen, and related to Bruce in the ninth degree. Lord Hales plainly proves, that this prophecy is perverted from its original purpose, in order to apply it to the succession of James VI. The groundwork of the forgery is to be found in the prophecies of Berlington, contained in the same collection, and runs thus :—

'Of Bruce's left side shall spring out a leafe,
As neere as the ninth degree ;
And shall be fleemed of faire Scotland,
In France farre beyond the sea.
And then shall come againe ryding,
With eyes that many men may see.
At Aberladie he shall light,
With hempen helteres and horse of tre.

. . . . . .

However it happen for to fall,
The lyon shall be lord of all ;
The French quen shal bearre the sonne,
Shal rule all Britainne to the sea ;
Ane from the Bruce's blood shal come also,
As neere as the ninth degree.

. . . . . .

Yet shal there come a keene knight over the salt sea,
A keene man of courage and bold man of armes ;
A duke's son dowbled (*i.e.* dubbed), a borne man in France,
That shal our mirths augment, and mend all our harmes ;
After the date of our Lord 1513, and thrice three thereafter ;
Which shal brooke all the broad isle to himself.
Between 13 and thrice three the threip shal be ended,
The Saxons shall never recover after.'

There cannot be any doubt that this prophecy was intended to excite the confidence of the Scottish nation in the Duke of Albany, Regent of Scotland, who arrived from France in 1515, two years after the death of James IV. in the fatal field of Flodden. The Regent was descended of Bruce by the left, *i.e.* by the female side, within the ninth degree. His mother was daughter of the Earl of Boulogne, his father banished from his country—'fleemit of fair Scotland.' His arrival must necessarily be by sea, and his landing was expected at Aberlady, in the Frith of Forth. He was a duke's son, dubbed knight; and nine years, from 1513, are allowed him, by the pretended prophet, for the accomplishment of the salvation of his country, and the exaltation of Scotland over her sister and rival. All this was a pious fraud, to excite the confidence and spirit of the country.

The prophecy, put in the name of our Thomas the Rhymer, as it stands in Hart's book, refers to a later period. The narrator meets the Rhymer *upon a land beside a lee,* who shows him many emblematical visions, described in no mean strain of poetry. They chiefly relate to the fields of Flodden and Pinkie, to the national distress which followed these defeats, and to future halcyon days, which are promised to Scotland. One quotation or two will be sufficient to establish this fully:—

'Our Scottish king sal come ful keene,
The red lyon beareth he;
A feddered arrow sharp, I weene,
Shall make him winke and warre to see.
Out of the field he shall be led,
When he is bludie and woe for blood;
Yet to his men shall he say,

"For God's luve, turn you againe,
And give yon sutherne folk a frey!
Why should I lose the right is mine?
My date is not to die this day."'

Who can doubt, for a moment, that this refers to the battle of Flodden, and to the popular reports concerning the doubtful fate of James IV.? Allusion is immediately afterwards made to the death of George Douglas, heir-apparent of Angus, who fought and fell with his sovereign:—

'The sternes three that day shall die,
That bears the harte in silver sheen.'

The well-known arms of the Douglas family are the heart and three stars. In another place, the battle of Pinkie is expressly mentioned by name:—

'At Pinken Cluch there shall be spilt
Much gentle blood that day;
There shall the bear lose the guilt,
And the eagill bear it away.'

To the end of all this allegorical and mystical rhapsody is interpolated, in the later edition by Andro Hart, a new edition of Berlington's verses, before quoted, altered and manufactured so as to bear reference to the accession of James VI., which had just then taken place. The insertion is made with a peculiar degree of awkwardness, betwixt a question, put by the narrator, concerning the name and abode of the person who showed him these strange matters, and the answer of the prophet to that question:—

'Then to the Beirne could I say,
Where dwells thou, or in what countrie?'
[Or who shall rule the isle of Britaine,
From the north to the south sey?

A French queene shall beare the sonne,
Shall rule all Britaine to the sea;
Which of the Bruce's blood shall come,
As neere as the nint degree:
I frained fast what was his name,
Where that he came, from what country.]
In Erslingtoun I dwell at hame,
Thomas Rymour men cals me.'

There is surely no one who will not conclude, with Lord Hailes, that the eight lines, enclosed in brackets, are a clumsy interpolation, borrowed from Berlington, with such alterations as might render the supposed prophecy applicable to the union of the crowns.

While we are on this subject, it may be proper briefly to notice the scope of some of the other predictions in Hart's Collection. As the prophecy of Berlington was intended to raise the spirits of the nation, during the Regency of Albany, so those of Sybilla and Eltraine refer to that of the Earl of Arran, afterwards Duke of Chatelherault, during the minority of Mary, a period of similar calamity. This is obvious from the following verses:—

'Take a thousand in calculation,
And the longest of the lyon,
Four crescents under one crowne,
With Saint Andrew's croce thrise,
Then threescore and thrise three:
Take tent to Merling truely,
Then shall the warres ended be,
And never againe rise.
In that yere there shall a king,
A duke, and no crowned king;
Becaus the prince shal be yong,
And tender of yeares.'

The date, above hinted at, seems to be 1549, when the Scottish Regent, by means of some succours derived from France, was endeavouring to repair the consequences of the fatal battle of Pinkie. Allusion is made to the supply given to the 'Moldwarte (England) by the fained hart' (the Earl of Angus.) The Regent is described by his bearing the antelope; large supplies are promised from France, and complete conquest predicted to Scotland and her allies. Thus was the same hackneyed stratagem repeated, whenever the interest of the rulers appeared to stand in need of it. The Regent was not, indeed, till after this period, created Duke of Chatelherault; but that honour was the object of his hopes and expectations.

The name of our renowned soothsayer is liberally used as an authority, throughout all the prophecies published by Andro Hart. Besides those expressly put in his name, Gildas, another assumed personage, is supposed to derive his knowledge from him; for he concludes thus:—

> 'True Thomas me told in a troublesome time,
> In a harvest morn at Eldoun hills.'
>
> *The Prophecy of Gildas.*

In the prophecy of Berlington, already quoted, we are told,

> 'Marvellous Merlin, that many men of tells,
> And Thomas's sayings comes all at once.'

While I am upon the subject of these prophecies, may I be permitted to call the attention of antiquaries to Merdwynn Wyllt, or *Merlin the Wild*, in whose name, and by no means in that of Ambrose

Merlin, the friend of Arthur, the Scottish prophecies are issued?[1] That this personage resided at Drummelziar, and roamed, like a second Nebuchadnezzar, the woods of Tweeddale, in remorse for the death of his nephew, we learn from Fordun. In the *Scotichronicon*, lib. iii. cap. 31, is an account of an interview betwixt St. Kentigern and Merlin, then in this distracted and miserable state. He is said to have been called *Lailoken*, from his mode of life. On being commanded by the saint to give an account of himself, he says, that the penance which he performs was imposed on him by a voice from heaven, during a bloody contest betwixt Lidel and Carwanolow, of which battle he had been the cause. According to his own prediction, he perished at once by wood, earth, and water; for, being pursued with stones by the rustics, he fell from a rock into the river Tweed, and was transfixed by a sharp stake, fixed there for the purpose of extending a fishing-net:—

> '*Sude perfossus, lapide percussus, et unda,*
> *Hæc tria Merlinum fertur inire necem.*
> *Sicque ruit, mersusque fuit lignoque prehensus,*
> *Et fecit vatem per terna pericula verum.*'

[1] [Professor Veitch (*Border History and Poetry*, i. 224-40) also argues for the existence of a second Merlin, Merlinus Caledonius. According to Welsh tradition both Merlins were bards; another theory is that *Merlin the Wild* is the name by which Ambrose Merlin was known in his later years; others argue that there was no Ambrose Merlin, and that *Merlin the Wild*, though an actual person, is, as prophet and magician, the creation of imaginative tradition; and lastly, Professor Rhys discovers in the Merlin tradition the 'adumbration of a personage who was at once a king and warrior, a great magician and prophet—in a word, a Zeus of Brythonic paganism.' See especially the Early English Text Society's edition of *Merlin*, ed. Wheatley, 1899, with essay on Merlin the Enchanter and Merlin the Bard, by D. W. Nash; and essay on Arthurian Localities, by J. G. Stuart-Glennie.]

But, in a metrical history of Merlin of Caledonia, compiled by Geoffrey of Monmouth, from the traditions of the Welsh bards, this mode of death is attributed to a page, whom Merlin's sister, desirous to convict the prophet of falsehood, because he had betrayed her intrigues, introduced to him, under three various disguises, inquiring each time in what manner the person should die. To the first demand Merlin answered, the party should perish by a fall from a rock; to the second, that he should die by a tree; and to the third, that he should be drowned. The youth perished, while hunting, in the mode imputed by Fordun to Merlin himself.

Fordun, contrary to the Welsh authorities, confounds this person with the Merlin of Arthur; but concludes by informing us, that many believed him to be a different person. The grave of Merlin is pointed out at Drummelziar, in Tweeddale, beneath an aged thorn-tree. On the east side of the churchyard, the brook, called Pausayl, falls into the Tweed; and the following prophecy is said to have been current concerning their union:—

'When Tweed and Pausayl join at Merlin's grave,
Scotland and England shall one monarch have.'

On the day of the coronation of James VI. the Tweed accordingly overflowed, and joined the Pausayl at the prophet's grave.—PENNYCUICK's *History of Tweeddale*, p. 26. These circumstances would seem to infer a communication betwixt the south-west of Scotland and Wales, of a nature peculiarly intimate; for I presume that Merlin would retain sense enough to choose, for the scene of his wanderings, a country, having a language and manners similar to his own.

Be this as it may, the memory of Merlin Sylvester, or the Wild, was fresh among the Scots during the reign of James v. Waldhave,[1] under whose name a set of prophecies was published, describes himself as lying upon Lomond Law; he hears a voice, which bids him stand to his defence; he looks around, and beholds a flock of hares and foxes[2] pursued over the mountain by a savage

[1] I do not know whether the person here meant be Waldhave, an abbot of Melrose, who died in the odour of sanctity, about 1160.

[2] The strange occupation, in which Waldhave beholds Merlin engaged, derives some illustration from a curious passage in Geoffrey of Monmouth's life of Merlin, above quoted. The poem, after narrating that the prophet had fled to the forest in a state of distraction, proceeds to mention, that, looking upon the stars one clear evening, he discerned, from his astrological knowledge, that his wife, Guendolen, had resolved, upon the next morning, to take another husband. As he had presaged to her that this would happen, and had promised her a nuptial gift (cautioning her, however, to keep the bridegroom out of his sight), he now resolved to make good his word. Accordingly he collected all the stags and lesser game in his neighbourhood; and, having seated himself upon a buck, drove the herd before him to the capital of Cumberland, where Guendolen resided. But her lover's curiosity leading him to inspect too nearly this extraordinary cavalcade, Merlin's rage was awakened, and he slew him with the stroke of an antler of the stag. The original runs thus:—

'*Dixerat: et silvas et saltus circuit omnes,*
Cervorumque greges agmen collegit in unum,
Et damas, capreasque simul, cervoque resedit;
Et veniente die, compellens agmina præ se,
Festinans vadit quo nubit Guendolœna.
Postquam venit eo, pacienter ipse coegit
Cervos ante fores, proclamans, 'Guendolœna,
Guendolœna, veni, te talia munera spectant.'
Ocius ergo venit subridens Guendolœna,
Gestarique virum cervo miratur, et illum
Sic parere viro, tantum quoque posse ferarum
Uniri numerum quas præ se solus agebat,
Sicut pastor oves, quas ducere suevit ad herbas.
Stabat ab excelsa, sponsus spectando fenestra,
In solio mirans equitem, risumque movebat.
Ast ubi vidit eum vates, animoque quis esset

figure, to whom he can hardly give the name of man. At the sight of Waldhave, the apparition leaves the object of his pursuit, and assaults him with a club. Waldhave defends himself with his sword, throws the savage to the earth, and refuses to let him arise till he swear, by the law and lead he lives upon, 'to do him no harm.' This done, he permits him to arise, and marvels at his strange appearance:—

'He was formed like a freike (man) all his four quarters;
And then his chin and his face haired so thick,
With haire growing so grime, fearful to see.'

He answers briefly to Waldhave's inquiry concerning his name and nature, that he 'drees his weird,' *i.e.* does penance, in that wood; and, having hinted that questions as to his own state are offensive, he pours forth an obscure rhapsody concerning futurity, and concludes,

'Go musing upon Merlin if thou wilt;
For I mean no more, man, at this time.'

This is exactly similar to the meeting betwixt Merlin and Kentigern in Fordun. These prophecies

---

Calluit, extemplo divulsit cornua cervo
Quo gestabatur, vibrataque jecit in illum,
Et caput illius penitus contrivit, eumque
Reddidit exanimem, vitamque fugavit in auras;
Ocius inde suum, talorum verbere, cervum
Diffugiens egit, silvasque redire paravit.'

For a perusal of this curious poem, accurately copied from a MS. in the Cotton Library, nearly coeval with the author, I was indebted to my learned friend, the late Mr. Ritson. There is an excellent paraphrase of it in the curious and entertaining *Specimens of Early English Romances*, lately published by Mr. Ellis. [3 vols. 1805, 2nd ed. 1811, and ed. Halliwell, 1848. The poem was published by the Roxburghe Club, ed. Black, 1830.]

of Merlin seem to have been in request in the minority of James v.; for, among the amusements, with which Sir David Lindsay diverted that prince during his infancy, are,

'The prophecies of Rymer, Bede, and Merlin.'
SIR DAVID LINDSAY'S *Epistle to the King.*

And we find, in Waldhave, at least one allusion to the very ancient prophecy, addressed to the Countess of Dunbar:—

'This is a true token that Thomas of tells,
When a ladde with a ladye shall go over the fields.'

The original stands thus:—

'When laddes weddeth lovedies.'

Another prophecy of Merlin seems to have been current about the time of the Regent Morton's execution. When that nobleman was committed to the charge of his accuser, Captain James Stewart, newly created Earl of Arran, to be conducted to his trial at Edinburgh, Spottiswoode says, that he asked, 'Who was Earl of Arran?' 'and being answered that Captain James was the man, after a short pause he said, "And is it so? I know then what I may look for!" meaning, as was thought, that the old prophecy of the "Falling of the heart[1] by the mouth of Arran," should then be fulfilled. Whether this was his mind or not, it is not known; but some spared not, at the time when the Hamiltons were banished, in which business he was held too earnest, to say, that he stood in fear of that prediction, and went that course only to disappoint it.

[1] The heart was the cognisance of Morton.

But, if so it was, he did find himself now deluded; for he fell by the mouth of another Arran than he imagined.'—SPOTTISWOODE, 313. The fatal words alluded to seem to be these in the prophecy of Merlin:—

'In the mouthe of Arrane a selcouth shall fall,
Two bloodie hearts shall be taken with a false traine,
And derfly dung down without any dome.'

To return from these desultory remarks, into which the Editor has been led by the celebrated name of Merlin, the style of all these prophecies, published by Hart, is very much the same. The measure is alliterative, and somewhat similar to that of *Pierce Plowman's Visions*; a circumstance which might entitle us to ascribe to some of them an earlier date than the reign of James v., did we not know that *Sir Galloran of Galloway*, and *Gawaine and Gologras*,[1] two romances rendered almost unintelligible by the extremity of affected alliteration, are perhaps not prior to that period. Indeed, although we may allow, that, during much earlier times, prophecies, under the names of those celebrated soothsayers, have been current in Scotland, yet those published by Hart have obviously been so often vamped and revamped, to serve the political purposes of different periods, that it may be shrewdly suspected, that, as in the case of Sir John Cutler's transmigrated stockings, very little of the original materials now remains. I cannot refrain from indulging my readers with the pub-

[1] [Those romances are now generally regarded as of much earlier date; but similar staves were still occasionally used in the reign of James v.]

lisher's title to the last prophecy, as it contains certain curious information concerning the Queen of Sheba, who is identified with the Cumæan Sybil: 'Here followeth a prophecie, pronounced by a noble queene and matron, called Sybilla, Regina Austri, that came to Solomon. Through the which she compiled four bookes, at the instance of the said King Sol, and others divers: and the fourth book was directed to a noble king, called Baldwine, King of the broad isle of Britain; in the which she maketh mention of two noble princes and emperours, the which is called Leones. How these two shall subdue and overcome all earthlie princes to their diademe and crowne, and also be glorified and crowned in the heaven among saints. The first of these two is Constantinus Magnus; that was Leprosus, the son of Saint Helena, that found the croce. The second is the sixt king of the name of Steward of Scotland, the which is our most noble king.' With such editors and commentators, what wonder that the text became unintelligible, even beyond the usual oracular obscurity of prediction?

If there still remain, therefore, among these predictions, any verses having a claim to real antiquity, it seems now impossible to discover them from those which are comparatively modern. Nevertheless, as there are to be found, in these compositions, some uncommonly wild and masculine expressions, the Editor has been induced to throw a few passages together, into the sort of ballad to which this disquisition is prefixed. It would, indeed, have been no difficult matter for him, by a judicious selection, to have excited, in favour of Thomas of Ercildoune, a share of the admiration

bestowed by sundry wise persons upon Mass Robert Fleming.[1] For example :—

'But then the lilye shall be loused when they least think ;
Then clear king's blood shal quake for fear of death ;
For churls shal chop off heads of their chief beirns,
And carfe of the crowns that Christ hath appointed.

. . . . . .

'Thereafter, on every side, sorrow shal arise ;
The barges of clear barons down shal be sunken ;
Seculars shal sit in spiritual seats,
Occupying offices anointed as they were.'

Taking the lilye for the emblem of France, can there be a more plain prophecy of the murder of her monarch, the destruction of her nobility, and the desolation of her hierarchy?

But, without looking further into the signs of the times, the Editor, though the least of all the prophets, cannot help thinking, that every true Briton will approve of his application of the last prophecy quoted in the ballad.

Hart's collection of prophecies was frequently reprinted during the last century, probably to favour the pretensions of the unfortunate family of Stewart. For the prophetic renown of Gildas and Bede, see FORDUN, lib. iii.

Before leaving the subject of Thomas's predictions, it may be noticed, that sundry rhymes, passing for his prophetic effusions, are still current among the vulgar. Thus, he is said to have pro-

[1] [The Rev. R. Fleming, pastor of a Scotch congregation in London, published, in 1701, *Discourses on the Rise and Fall of Papacy*, in which he expressed his belief, founded on a text in the Apocalypse, that the French Monarchy would undergo some remarkable humiliation about 1794.—J. G. L.]

phesied of the very ancient family of Haig of Bemerside,

'Betide, betide, whate'er betide,
Haig shall be Haig of Bemerside.'

The grandfather of the present proprietor of Bemerside had twelve daughters, before his lady brought him a male heir. The common people trembled for the credit of their favourite soothsayer. The late Mr. Haig was at length born, and their belief in the prophecy confirmed beyond a shadow of doubt.[1]

Another memorable prophecy bore, that the Old Kirk at Kelso, constructed out of the ruins of the abbey, should 'fall when at the fullest.' At a very crowded sermon, about thirty years ago, a piece of lime fell from the roof of the church. The alarm, for the fulfilment of the words of the seer, became universal; and happy were they who were nearest the door of the predestined edifice. The church was in consequence deserted, and has

[1] [Anthony Haig, who was laird of Bemersyde in the latter half of the seventeenth century, reports the prophecy as follows:—

'Come what will come, tyde what may tyde,
A Haig shall be laird of Bemersyde.'

Or

'Whatever happen or betyde,
A Haig shall be laird of Bemersyde.'

The family motto is 'Tyde what may.' The 'late Mr. Haig,' to whom Scott refers, was XXIII in succession. Since Scott's time the prophecy has had further confirmation. James Haig, XXV in descent, died in 1854 without issue, leaving the estate to his three sisters; but none of them married, and they made a joint disposition by which they conveyed the whole estate and lands of Bemersyde, in succession to the one of them last surviving, to their cousin Lieutenant-Colonel Arthur Balfour Haig, who succeeded in November 1878 (RUSSELL's *Haigs of Bemersyde*).]

never since had an opportunity of tumbling upon a full congregation. I hope, for the sake of a beautiful specimen of Saxo-Gothic architecture, that the accomplishment of this prophecy is far distant.

Another prediction, ascribed to the Rhymer, seems to have been founded on that sort of insight into futurity, possessed by most men of a sound and combining judgment. It runs thus:—

> 'At Eildon Tree if you shall be,
> A brigg ower Tweed you there may see.'

The spot in question commands an extensive prospect of the course of the river; and it was easy to foresee, that when the country should become in the least degree improved, a bridge would be somewhere thrown over the stream. In fact, you now see no less than three bridges from that elevated situation.

Corspatrick (Comes Patrick), Earl of March, but more commonly taking his title from his castle of Dunbar, acted a noted part during the wars of Edward I. in Scotland. As Thomas of Ercildoune is said to have delivered to him his famous prophecy of King Alexander's death, the Editor has chosen to introduce him into the following ballad. All the prophetic verses are selected from Hart's publication. [Cospatrick was not the name of any of the Earls of Dunbar of the thirteenth century. It was to Patrick, seventh Earl of Dunbar, that Thomas of Ercildoune delivered his prophecy. Both he and his successor Patrick, eighth Earl, who was the first of the Earls of Dunbar, designated Earl of March, or Merse, were strenuous supporters of the policy of Edward I.]

THOMAS THE RHYMER

PART SECOND

I

When seven years were come and gane,
The sun blinked fair on pool and stream;
And Thomas lay on Huntlie bank,
Like one awaken'd from a dream.

II

He heard the trampling of a steed,
He saw the flash of armour flee,
And he beheld a gallant knight
Come riding down by the Eildon-tree.

III

He was a stalwart knight, and strong;
Of giant make he 'peared to be:
He stirr'd his horse, as he were wode,
Wi' gilded spurs, of faushion free.

IV

Says—'Well met, well met, true Thomas!
Some uncouth ferlies show to me!'

Says—'Christ thee save, Corspatrick brave!
Thrice welcome, good Dunbar,[1] to me!

V

'Light down, light down, Corspatrick brave!
And I will show thee curses three,
Shall gar fair Scotland greet and grane,
And change the green to the black livery.

VI

'A storm shall roar this very hour,
From Ross's Hills to Solway sea.'
'Ye lied, ye lied, ye warlock hoar!
For the sun shines sweet on fauld and lea.'

VII

He put his hand on the Earlie's head;
He show'd him a rock beside the sea,
Where a king lay stiff beneath his steed,[2]
And steel-dight nobles wiped their ee.

VIII

'The neist curse lights on Branxton hills;
By Flodden's high and heathery side,
Shall wave a banner red as blude,
And chieftains throng wi' meikle pride.

[1] [The Earl of Dunbar, in the time of the 'Rhymer,' was not Cospatrick, but Patrick, seventh Earl.]

[2] King Alexander, killed by a fall from his horse, near Kinghorn.

IX

'A Scottish King shall come full keen,
The ruddy lion beareth he;
A feather'd arrow sharp, I ween,
Shall make him wink and warre to see.

X

'When he is bloody, and all to bledde,
Thus to his men he still shall say—
"For God's sake, turn ye back again,
And give yon southern folk a fray!
Why should I lose the right is mine?
My doom is not to die this day."[1]

XI

'Yet turn ye to the eastern hand,
And woe and wonder ye sall see;
How forty thousand spearmen stand,
Where yon rank river meets the sea.

XII

'There shall the lion lose the gylte,
And the libbards bear it clean away;
At Pinkyn Cleuch there shall be spilt
Much gentil blude that day.'

[1] The uncertainty which long prevailed in Scotland concerning the fate of James IV. is well known.

XIII

'Enough, enough, of curse and ban;
Some blessings show thou now to me,
Or, by the faith o' my bodie,' Corspatrick said,
'Ye shall rue the day ye e'er saw me!

XIV

'The first of blessings I shall thee show,
Is by a burn, that 's call'd of bread;[1]
Where Saxon men shall tine the bow,
And find their arrows lack the head.

XV

'Beside that brigg, out ower that burn,
Where the water bickereth bright and sheen,
Shall many a falling courser spurn,
And knights shall die in battle keen.

XVI

'Beside a headless cross of stone,
The libbards there shall lose the gree;
The raven shall come, the erne shall go,
And drink the Saxon blude sae free.
The cross of stone they shall not know,
So thick the corses there shall be.'

[1] One of Thomas's rhymes, preserved by tradition, runs thus:—

'The burn of breid
Shall run fow reid.'

Bannock-burn is the brook here meant. The Scots give the name of *bannock* to a thick round cake of unleavened bread.

XVII

'But tell me now,' said brave Dunbar,
'True Thomas, tell now unto me,
What man shall rule the isle Britain,
Even from the north to the southern sea?'

XVIII

'A French Queen shall bear the son,
Shall rule all Britain to the sea;
He of the Bruce's blude shall come,
As near as in the ninth degree.

XIX

'The waters worship shall his race;
Likewise the waves of the farthest sea;
For they shall ride over ocean wide,
With hempen bridles, and horse of tree.'

THOMAS THE RHYMER

THIRD PART.—MODERN

BY THE EDITOR

Thomas the Rhymer was renowned among his contemporaries as the author of the celebrated romance of *Sir Tristrem*. Of this once-admired poem only one copy is now known to exist, which is in the Advocates' Library. The Editor, in 1804, published a small edition of this curious work; which, if it does not revive the reputation of the Bard of Ercildoune, is at least the earliest specimen of Scottish poetry hitherto published.[1] Some account of this romance has already been given to the world in Mr. Ellis's *Specimens of Ancient Poetry*, vol. i. p. 165, iii. p. 410; a work to which our predecessors and our posterity are alike obliged; the former, for the preservation of the best selected examples of their poetical taste; and the latter, for a history of the English language, which will only cease to be interesting with the existence of our mother-tongue, and all that genius and learning have recorded in it. It is sufficient here to mention, that so great was the reputation of the romance of *Sir Tristrem*, that few were thought

[1] [It has also been published by Kölbing at Heilbronn, 1882; and by the Scottish Text Society, ed. G. P. M'Neill, 1886. Ercildoune's authorship is doubted by many critics, but Mr. G. P. M'Neill makes out a fair case on his behalf.]

capable of reciting it after the manner of the author —a circumstance alluded to by Robert de Brunne, the annalist :—

> 'I see in song, in sedgeyng tale,
> Of Erceldoun, and of Kendale,
> Now thame says as they thame wroght,
> And in thare saying it seems nocht.
> That thou may here in Sir Tristrem,
> Over gestes it has the steme,
> Over all that is or was ;
> If men it said as made Thomas,' etc.

It appears, from a very curious MS. of the thirteenth century, *penes* Mr. Douce of London, containing a French metrical romance of *Sir Tristrem*, that the work of our Thomas the Rhymer was known, and referred to, by the ministrels of Normandy and Bretagne. Having arrived at a part of the romance where reciters were wont to differ in the mode of telling the story, the French bard expressly cites the authority of the poet of Ercildoune :—

> *'Plusurs de nos granter ne volent,*
> *Co que del naim dire se solent,*
> *Ki femme Kaherdin dut aimer,*
> *Li naim redut Tristram narrer,*
> *E entusché par grant engin,*
> *Quant il afole Kaherdin ;*
> *Pur cest plaie e pur cest mal,*
> *Enveiad Tristram Guvernal,*
> *En Engleterre pur Ysolt*
> THOMAS *ico granter ne volt,*
> *Et si volt par raisun mostrer,*
> *Qu' ico ne put pas esteer,'* etc.

The tale of *Sir Tristrem*, as narrated in the Edin-

burgh MS., is totally different from the voluminous romance in prose, originally compiled on the same subject by Rusticien de Puise, and analysed by M. de Tressan; but agrees in every essential particular with the metrical performance just quoted, which is a work of much higher antiquity.[1]

The following attempt to commemorate the Rhymer's poetical fame, and the traditional account of his marvellous return to Fairy Land, being entirely modern, would have been placed with greater propriety among the class of Modern Ballads, had it not been for its immediate connection with the first and second parts of the same story.

[1] [The 'Thomas' referred to in Scott's quotation was Thomas of Brittany, author of an Anglo-Norman version of much earlier date than *Sir Tristrem*, and undoubtedly utilised by the author of *Sir Tristrem*, whether the Rhymer or not. In other words, *Sir Tristrem* is derived from Anglo-Norman sources, and not *vice versâ*.]

THOMAS THE RHYMER

PART THIRD

I

When seven years more were come and gone,
Was war through Scotland spread,
And Ruberslaw show'd high Dunyon
His beacon blazing red.

II

Then all by bonny Coldingknow,
Pitched palliouns[1] took their room,
And crested helms, and spears a rowe,
Glanced gaily through the broom.

III

The Leader, rolling to the Tweed,
Resounds the ensenzie;[2]
They roused the deer from Caddenhead,
To distant Torwoodlee.

IV

The feast was spread in Ercildoune,
In Learmont's high and ancient hall;

[1] *Palliouns*, tents. [2] *Ensenzie*, war-cry, or gathering word.

And there were knights of great renown,
And ladies, laced in pall.

V

Nor lacked they, while they sat at dine,
The music, nor the tale,
Nor goblets of the blood-red wine,
Nor mantling quaighs[1] of ale.

VI

True Thomas rose, with harp in hand,
When as the feast was done:
(In minstrel strife, in Fairy Land,
The elfin harp he won.)

VII

Hush'd were the throng, both limb and tongue,
And harpers for envy pale;
And armèd lords lean'd on their swords,
And hearken'd to the tale.

VIII

In numbers high, the witching tale
The prophet pour'd along;
No after bard might e'er avail[2]
Those numbers to prolong.

[1] *Quaighs*, wooden cups, composed of staves hooped together.
[2] See introduction to this ballad.

IX

Yet fragments of the lofty strain
Float down the tide of years,
As, buoyant on the stormy main,
A parted wreck appears.

X

He sung King Arthur's Table Round:
The Warrior of the Lake;
How courteous Gawaine met the wound,
And bled for ladies' sake.

XI

But chief, in gentle Tristrem's praise,
The notes melodious swell;
Was none excell'd, in Arthur's days,
The knight of Lionelle.

XII

For Marke, his cowardly uncle's right,
A venom'd wound he bore;
When fierce Morholde he slew in fight,
Upon the Irish shore.

XIII

No art the poison might withstand;
No medicine could be found,
Till lovely Isolde's lily hand
Had probed the rankling wound.

XIV

With gentle hand and soothing tongue
She bore the leech's part;
And while she o'er his sick-bed hung,
He paid her with his heart.

XV

O fatal was the gift, I ween!
For, doom'd in evil tide,
The maid must be rude Cornwall's queen,
His cowardly uncle's bride.

XVI

Their loves, their woes, the gifted bard
In fairy tissue wove;
Where lords, and knights, and ladies bright,
In gay confusion strove.

XVII

The Garde Joyeuse, amid the tale,
High rear'd its glittering head;
And Avalon's enchanted vale
In all its wonders spread.

XVIII

Brangwain was there, and Segramore,
And fiend-born Merlin's gramarye;
Of that famed wizard's mighty lore,
O who could sing but he?

XIX

Through many a maze the winning song
In changeful passion led,
Till bent at length the listening throng
O'er Tristrem's dying bed.

XX

His ancient wounds their scars expand,
With agony his heart is wrung:
O where is Isolde's lilye hand,
And where her soothing tongue?

XXI

She comes! she comes!—like flash of flame
Can lovers' footsteps fly:
She comes! she comes!—she only came
To see her Tristrem die.

XXII

She saw him die; her latest sigh
Join'd in a kiss his parting breath:
The gentlest pair that Britain bare,
United are in death.

XXIII

There paused the harp; its lingering sound
Died slowly on the ear;
The silent guests still bent around,
For still they seem'd to hear.

XXIV

Then woe broke forth in murmurs weak;
Nor ladies heav'd alone the sigh;
But, half ashamed, the rugged cheek,
Did many a gauntlet dry.

XXV

On Leader's stream, and Learmont's tower,
The mists of evening close;
In camp, in castle, or in bower,
Each warrior sought repose.

XXVI

Lord Douglas, in his lofty tent,
Dream'd o'er the woeful tale;
When footsteps light, across the bent,
The warrior's ears assail.

XXVII

He starts, he wakes;—'What, Richard, ho!
Arise, my page, arise!
What venturous wight, at dead of night,
Dare step where Douglas lies!'

XXVIII

Then forth they rushed: by Leader's tide,
A selcouth[1] sight they see—
A hart and hind pace side by side,
As white as snow on Fairnalie.

[1] *Selcouth*, wondrous.

XXIX

Beneath the moon, with gesture proud,
They stately move and slow;
Nor scare they at the gathering crowd,
Who marvel as they go.

XXX

To Learmont's tower a message sped,
As fast as page might run;
And Thomas started from his bed,
And soon his clothes did on.

XXXI

First he woxe pale, and then woxe red;
Never a word he spake but three;—
'My sand is run; my thread is spun;
This sign regardeth me.'

XXXII

The elfin harp his neck around,
In minstrel guise, he hung;
And on the wind, in doleful sound,
Its dying accents rung.

XXXIII

Then forth he went; yet turn'd him oft
To view his ancient hall;
On the grey tower, in lustre soft,
The autumn moonbeams fall.

XXXIV

And Leader's waves, like silver sheen,
Danced shimmering in the ray;
In deepening mass, at distance seen,
Broad Soltra's mountains lay.

XXXV

'Farewell, my father's ancient tower!
A long farewell,' said he;
'The scene of pleasure, pomp, or power,
Thou never more shalt be.

XXXVI

'To Learmont's name no foot of earth
Shall here again belong,
And, on thy hospitable hearth,
The hare shall leave her young.

XXXVII

'Adieu! adieu!' again he cried,
All as he turned him roun'—
'Farewell to Leader's silver tide!
Farewell to Ercildoune!'

XXXVIII

The hart and hind approach'd the place,
As lingering yet he stood;
And there, before Lord Douglas' face,
With them he cross'd the flood.

XXXIX

Lord Douglas leaped on his berry-brown steed,
And spurr'd him the Leader o'er;
But though he rode with lightning speed,
He never saw them more.

XL

Some said to hill, and some to glen,
Their wondrous course had been;
But ne'er in haunts of living men
Again was Thomas seen.

NOTES

ON

THOMAS THE RHYMER

PART THIRD

And Ruberslaw show'd high Dunyon.—St. i. l. 3.

Ruberslaw and Dunyon are two hills above Jedburgh.

Then all by bonny Coldingknow—St. ii. l. 1.

An ancient tower near Ercildoune, belonging to a family of the name of Home. One of Thomas's prophecies is said to have run thus:—

'Vengeance! vengeance! when and where?
On the house of Coldingknow, now and ever mair!'

The spot is rendered classical by its having given name to the beautiful melody called the *Broom o' the Cowdenknows.*

They roused the deer from Caddenhead,
To distant Torwoodlee—St. iii. ll. 3-4.

Torwoodlee and Caddenhead are places in Selkirkshire.

How courteous Gawaine met the wound.—St. x. l. 3.

See, in the *Fabliaux* of Monsieur le Grand, elegantly translated by the late Gregory Way, Esq., the tale of the *Knight and the Sword.*—[Vol. ii. p. 3.—J. G. L.]

As white as snow on Fairnalie.—St. xxviii. l. 4.

An ancient seat upon the Tweed, in Selkirkshire. In a popular edition of the first part of Thomas the Rhymer, the Fairy Queen thus addresses him:—

'Gin ye wad meet wi' me again,
Gang to the bonny banks of Fairnalie.'

GLENFINLAS

OR

LORD RONALD'S CORONACH[1]

BY WALTER SCOTT

THE simple tradition, upon which the following stanzas are founded, runs thus:—While two Highland hunters were passing the night in a solitary *bothy* (a hut, built for the purpose of hunting), and making merry over their venison and whisky, one of them expressed a wish that they had pretty lasses to complete their party. The words were scarcely uttered, when two beautiful young women, habited in green, entered the hut, dancing and singing. One of the hunters was seduced by the siren, who attached herself particularly to him, to leave the hut: the other remained, and, suspicious of the fair seducers, continued to play upon a trump, or Jew's harp, some strain, consecrated to the Virgin Mary. Day at length came, and the temptress vanished. Searching in the forest, he found the bones of his unfortunate friend, who had been torn to pieces and devoured by the fiend into whose toils he had fallen. The place was from thence called the Glen of the Green Women.

Glenfinlas is a tract of forest-ground, lying in

[1] *Coronach* is the lamentation for a deceased warrior, sung by the aged of the clan.

the Highlands of Perthshire, not far from Callander, in Menteith. It was formerly a royal forest, and now belongs to the Earl of Moray. This country, as well as the adjacent district of Balquidder, was, in times of yore, chiefly inhabited by the Macgregors. To the west of the Forest of Glenfinlas lies Loch Katrine, and its romantic avenue, called the Trossachs. Benledi, Benmore, and Benvoirlich, are mountains in the same district, and at no great distance from Glenfinlas. The river Teith passes Callander and the castle of Doune, and joins the Forth near Stirling. The Pass of Lenny is immediately above Callander, and is the principal access to the Highlands, from that town. Glenartney is a forest, near Benvoirlich. The whole forms a sublime tract of Alpine scenery.

This ballad first appeared in the *Tales of Wonder.*

[The scenery of this, the author's first serious attempt at poetry, reappears in the *Lady of the Lake,* in *Waverley,* and in *Rob Roy.*—J. G. L.]

GLENFINLAS

OR

LORD RONALD'S CORONACH

'For them the viewless forms of air obey,
Their bidding heed, and at their beck repair;
They know what spirit brews the stormful day,
And heartless oft, like moody madness, stare,
To see the phantom-train their secret work prepare.'

COLLINS.

I

'O HONE a rie'! O hone a rie'![1]
The pride of Albin's line is o'er,
And fallen Glenartney's stateliest tree;
We ne'er shall see Lord Ronald more!'

II

O, sprung from great Macgillianore,
The chief that never fear'd a foe,
How matchless was thy broad claymore,
How deadly thine unerring bow!

III

Well can the Saxon widows tell,
How, on the Teith's resounding shore,
The boldest Lowland warriors fell,
As down from Lenny's pass you bore.

O hone a rie'! signifies, 'Alas for the prince, or chief.'

IV

But o'er his hills, on festal-day,
How blazed Lord Ronald's beltane-tree;
While youths and maids the light strathspey
So nimbly danced with Highland glee.

V

Cheer'd by the strength of Ronald's shell,
E'en age forgot his tresses hoar;
But now the loud lament we swell,
O ne'er to see Lord Ronald more!

VI

From distant isles a Chieftain came,
The joys of Ronald's halls to find,
And chase with him the dark-brown game,
That bounds o'er Albin's hills of wind.

VII

'Twas Moy; whom in Columba's isle
The seer's prophetic spirit found,
As, with a minstrel's fire the while,
He waked his harp's harmonious sound.

VIII

Full many a spell to him was known,
Which wandering spirits shrink to hear;
And many a lay of potent tone,
Was never meant for mortal ear.

IX

For there, 'tis said, in mystic mood,
High converse with the dead they hold,
And oft espy the fated shroud,
That shall the future corpse enfold.

X

O so it fell, that on a day,
To rouse the red deer from their den,
The Chiefs have ta'en their distant way,
And scour'd the deep Glenfinlas' glen.

XI

No vassals wait their sports to aid,
To watch their safety, deck their board;
Their simple dress, the Highland plaid,
Their trusty guard, the Highland sword.

XII

Three summer days, through brake and dell,
Their whistling shafts successful flew;
And still, when dewy evening fell,
The quarry to their hut they drew.

XIII

In grey Glenfinlas' deepest nook
The solitary cabin stood,
Fast by Moneira's sullen brook,
Which murmurs through that lonely wood.

XIV

Soft fell the night, the sky was calm,
When three successive days had flown;
And summer mist in dewy balm
Steep'd heathy bank, and mossy stone.

XV

The moon, half-hid in silvery flakes,
Afar her dubious radiance shed,
Quivering on Katrine's distant lakes,
And resting on Benledi's head.

XVI

Now in their hut, in social guise,
Their silvan fare the Chiefs enjoy;
And pleasure laughs in Ronald's eyes,
As many a pledge he quaffs to Moy.

XVII

'What lack we here to crown our bliss,
While thus the pulse of joy beats high?
What, but fair woman's yielding kiss,
Her panting breath and melting eye?

XVIII

'To chase the deer of yonder shades,
This morning left their father's pile
The fairest of our mountain maids,
The daughters of the proud Glengyle.

XIX

'Long have I sought sweet Mary's heart,
And dropp'd the tear, and heav'd the sigh;
But vain the lover's wily art,
Beneath a sister's watchful eye.

XX

'But thou mayst teach that guardian fair,
While far with Mary I am flown,
Of other hearts to cease her care,
And find it hard to guard her own.

XXI

'Touch but thy harp, thou soon shalt see
The lovely Flora of Glengyle,
Unmindful of her charge and me,
Hang on thy notes, 'twixt tear and smile.

XXII

'Or, if she choose a melting tale,
All underneath the greenwood bough,
Will good St. Oran's rule prevail,
Stern huntsman of the rigid brow?'—

XXIII

'Since Enrick's fight, since Morna's death,
No more on me shall rapture rise,
Responsive to the panting breath,
Or yielding kiss, or melting eyes.

XXIV

'E'en then, when o'er the heath of woe,
Where sunk my hopes of love and fame,
I bade my harp's wild wailings flow,
On me the Seer's sad spirit came.

XXV

'The last dread curse of angry heaven,
With ghastly sights and sounds of woe,
To dash each glimpse of joy was given—
The gift, the future ill to know.

XXVI

'The bark thou saw'st, yon summer morn,
So gaily part from Oban's bay,
My eye beheld her dash'd and torn,
Far on the rocky Colonsay.

XXVII

'Thy Fergus too—thy sister's son,
Thou saw'st with pride, the gallant's power,
As marching 'gainst the Lord of Downe,
He left the skirts of huge Benmore.

XXVIII

'Thou only saw'st their tartans[1] wave,
As down Benvoirlich's side they wound,

[1] *Tartans*, the full Highland dress, made of the chequered stuff so termed.

Heard'st but the pibroch,[1] answering brave
To many a target clanking round.

XXIX

'I heard the groans, I mark'd the tears,
I saw the wound his bosom bore,
When on the serried Saxon spears
He pour'd his clan's resistless roar.

XXX

'And thou, who bidst me think of bliss,
And bidst my heart awake to glee,
And court, like thee, the wanton kiss—
That heart, O Ronald, bleeds for thee!

XXXI

'I see the death-damps chill thy brow;
I hear thy Warning Spirit cry;
The corpse-lights dance—they 're gone, and now. . . .
No more is given to gifted eye!'——

XXXII

'Alone enjoy thy dreary dreams,
Sad prophet of the evil hour!
Say, should we scorn joy's transient beams,
Because to-morrow's storm may lour?

[1] *Pibroch*, a piece of martial music, adapted to the Highland bagpipe.

XXXIII

'Or false, or sooth, thy words of woe,
Clangillian's Chieftain ne'er shall fear;
His blood shall bound at rapture's glow,
Though doom'd to stain the Saxon spear.

XXXIV

'E'en now, to meet me in yon dell,
My Mary's buskins brush the dew.'
He spoke, nor bade the Chief farewell,
But call'd his dogs, and gay withdrew.

XXXV

Within an hour return'd each hound;
In rush'd the rousers of the deer;
They howl'd in melancholy sound,
Then closely couch'd beside the seer.

XXXVI

No Ronald yet; though midnight came,
And sad were Moy's prophetic dreams,
As, bending o'er the dying flame,
He fed the watch-fire's quivering gleams.

XXXVII

Sudden the hounds erect their ears,
And sudden cease their moaning howl;
Close press'd to Moy, they mark their fears
By shivering limbs, and stifled growl.

XXXVIII

Untouch'd, the harp began to ring,
As softly, slowly, oped the door;
And shook responsive every string,
As light a footstep press'd the floor.

XXXIX

And by the watch-fire's glimmering light,
Close by the minstrel's side was seen
An huntress maid, in beauty bright,
All dropping wet her robes of green.

XL

All dropping wet her garments seem;
Chill'd was her cheek, her bosom bare,
As bending o'er the dying gleam,
She wrung the moisture from her hair.

XLI

With maiden blush she softly said,
'O gentle huntsman, hast thou seen,
In deep Glenfinlas' moonlight glade,
A lovely maid in vest of green:

XLII

With her a Chief in Highland pride;
His shoulders bear the hunter's bow,
The mountain dirk adorns his side,
Far on the wind his tartans flow?'

XLIII

'And who art thou? and who are they?'
All ghastly gazing, Moy replied:
'And why, beneath the moon's pale ray,
Dare ye thus roam Glenfinlas' side?'

XLIV

'Where wild Loch Katrine pours her tide,
Blue, dark, and deep, round many an isle,
Our father's towers o'erhang her side,
The castle of the bold Glengyle.

XLV

'To chase the dun Glenfinlas' deer,
Our woodland course this morn we bore,
And haply met, while wandering here,
The son of great Macgillianore.

XLVI

'O aid me, then, to seek the pair,
Whom, loitering in the woods, I lost;
Alone, I dare not venture there,
Where walks, they say, the shrieking ghost.'

XLVII

'Yes, many a shrieking ghost walks there;
Then first, my own sad vow to keep,
Here will I pour my midnight prayer,
Which still must rise when mortals sleep.'

XLVIII

'O first, for pity's gentle sake,
Guide a lone wanderer on her way!
For I must cross the haunted brake,
And reach my father's towers ere day.'

XLIX

'First, three times tell each Ave-bead,
And thrice a Pater-noster say;
Then kiss with me the holy rede;
So shall we safely wend our way.'

L

'O shame to knighthood, strange and foul!
Go, doff the bonnet from thy brow,
And shroud thee in the monkish cowl,
Which best befits thy sullen vow.

LI

'Not so, by high Dunlathmon's fire,
Thy heart was froze to love and joy,
When gaily rung thy raptured lyre,
To wanton Morna's melting eye.'

LII

Wild stared the minstrel's eyes of flame,
And high his sable locks arose,
And quick his colour went and came,
As fear and rage alternate rose.

LIII

'And thou! when by the blazing oak
I lay, to her and love resign'd,
Say, rode ye on the eddying smoke,
Or sail'd ye on the midnight wind!

LIV

Not thine a race of mortal blood,
Nor old Glengyle's pretended line;
Thy dame, the Lady of the Flood,
Thy sire, the Monarch of the Mine.'

LV

He mutter'd thrice St. Oran's rhyme,
And thrice St. Fillan's powerful prayer;
Then turn'd him to the eastern clime,
And sternly shook his coal-black hair.

LVI

And, bending o'er his harp, he flung
His wildest witch-notes on the wind;
And loud, and high, and strange, they rung
As many a magic change they find.

LVII

Tall wax'd the Spirit's altering form,
Till to the roof her stature grew;
Then, mingling with the rising storm,
With one wild yell, away she flew.

LVIII

Rain beats, hail rattles, whirlwinds tear:
The slender hut in fragments flew;
But not a lock of Moy's loose hair
Was waved by wind, or wet by dew.

LIX

Wild mingling with the howling gale,
Loud bursts of ghastly laughter rise;
High o'er the minstrel's head they sail,
And die amid the northern skies.

LX

The voice of thunder shook the wood,
As ceased the more than mortal yell;
And, spattering foul, a shower of blood
Upon the hissing firebrands fell.

LXI

Next, dropp'd from high a mangled arm;
The fingers strain'd an half-drawn blade:
And last, the life-blood streaming warm,
Torn from the trunk, a gasping head.

LXII

Oft o'er that head, in battling field,
Stream'd the proud crest of high Benmore;
That arm the broad claymore could wield,
Which dyed the Teith with Saxon gore.

LXIII

Woe to Moneira's sullen rills!
Woe to Glenfinlas' dreary glen!
There never son of Albin's hills
Shall draw the hunter's shaft agen!

LXIV

E'en the tired pilgrim's burning feet
At noon shall shun that sheltering den,
Lest, journeying in their rage, he meet
The wayward Ladies of the Glen.

LXV

And we—behind the Chieftain's shield,
No more shall we in safety dwell;
None leads the people to the field—
And we the loud lament must swell.

LXVI

O hone a rie'! O hone a rie'!
The pride of Albin's line is o'er,
And fall'n Glenartney's stateliest tree;
We ne'er shall see Lord Ronald more!

NOTES

ON

GLENFINLAS

Well can the Saxon widows tell.—St. iii. l. 2.

The term Sassenach, or Saxon, is applied by the Highlanders to their low-country neighbours.

How blazed Lord Ronald's beltane-tree.—St. iv. l. 2.

The fires lighted by the Highlanders on the first of May, in compliance with a custom derived from the Pagan times, are termed *The Beltane-Tree.* It is a festival celebrated with various superstitious rites, both in the north of Scotland and in Wales. [Beltane is regarded as the Celtic anniversary. From Druidic times cattle were made to pass between fires to protect them against the diseases of each year. There is a similar custom in Ireland. For the same reason, sheep were sacrificed in the Isle of Man (Rhys's *Celtic Folklore*, i. 307). There is also the possibility that in early times human beings were sacrificed. Professor Rhys is disposed to regard the Beltane customs as analogous to that of the Thargelia of the Athenians, when, among other things done, two adults were led about, as it were scapegoats, and at the end they were sacrificed and burnt, so that their ashes might be dispersed (*Celtic Heathendom*, pp. 517-521). On Beltane fires, see also Frazer's *Golden Bough*, iii. 259-265, and Ramsay's *Scotland and Scotsmen of the Eighteenth Century*, ii. 439-442.]

The seer's prophetic spirit found, etc.—St. vii. l. 2.

I can only describe the second-sight, by adopting Dr. Johnson's definition, who calls it 'An impression, either by the mind upon the eye, or by the eye upon the mind, by which things distant and future are perceived and seen as if they were present.' To which I would only add, that the spectral appearances thus presented, usually presage misfortune; that the faculty is painful to those who suppose they possess it; and that they usually acquire it while themselves under the pressure of melancholy. [It is hardly necessary to remind the reader of Scott's portrait of a melancholy and half-demented Highland seer, Allan Macaulay, in *The Legend of Montrose.*]

Will good St. Oran's rule prevail.—St. xxii. l. 3.

St. Oran was a friend and follower of St. Columba, and was buried in Icolmkill. His pretensions to be a saint were rather dubious. According to the legend, he consented to be buried alive, in order to propitiate certain demons of the soil, who obstructed the attempts of Columba to build a chapel. Columba caused the body of his friend to be dug up, after three days had elapsed: when Oran, to the horror and scandal of the assistants, declared, that there was neither a God, a judgment, nor a future state! He had no time to make further discoveries, for Columba caused the earth once more to be shovelled over him with the utmost despatch. The chapel, however, and the cemetery, was called *Relig Ouran*; and, in memory of his rigid celibacy, no female was permitted to pay her devotions, or be buried, in that place. This is the rule alluded to in the poem.

The corpse-lights dance—they're gone, and now. . . .
—St. xxxi. l. 3.

[See *ante,* vol. iii. pp. 240-1.]

And thrice St. Fillan's powerful prayer.—St. lv. l. 2.

St. Fillan has given his name to many chapels, holy fountains, etc., in Scotland. He was, according to

Camerarius, an abbot of Pittenweem, in Fife; from which situation he retired, and died a hermit in the wilds of Glenurchy, A.D. 649. While engaged in transcribing the Scriptures, his left hand was observed to send forth such a splendour, as to afford light to that with which he wrote; a miracle which saved many candles to the convent, as St. Fillan used to spend whole nights in that exercise. The 9th of January was dedicated to this saint, who gave his name to Kilfillan, in Renfrew, and St. Phillans, or Forgend, in Fife. Lesley, lib. 7, tells us, that Robert the Bruce was possessed of Fillan's miraculous and luminous arm, which he enclosed in a silver shrine, and had it carried at the head of his army. Previous to the battle of Bannockburn, the king's chaplain, a man of little faith, abstracted the relic, and deposited it in some place of security, lest it should fall into the hands of the English. But, lo! while Robert was addressing his prayers to the empty casket, it was observed to open and shut suddenly; and, on inspection, the saint was found to have himself deposited his arm in the shrine, as an assurance of victory. Such is the tale of Lesley. But though Bruce little needed that the arm of St. Fillan should assist his own, he dedicated to him, in gratitude, a priory at Killin, upon Loch Tay.

In the *Scots Magazine* for July 1802, there is a copy of a very curious crown-grant, dated 11th July 1487, by which James III. confirms, to Malice Doire, an inhabitant of Strathfillan, in Perthshire, the peaceable exercise and enjoyment of a relic of St. Fillan, being apparently the head of a pastoral staff called the Quegrich [properly *coig-gerach*], which he and his predecessors are said to have possessed since the days of Robert Bruce. As the Quegrich was used to cure diseases, this document is probably the most ancient patent ever granted for a quack medicine. The ingenious correspondent, by whom it is furnished, further observes, that additional particulars, concerning St. Fillan, are to be found in BALLENDEN'S *Boece*, Book 4, folio ccxiii, and in PENNANT'S *Tour in Scotland*, 1772, pp. 11, 15.

[St. Fillan, said to be the son of an Irish prince, is supposed to have died, not in 649, but in 777, and his commemoration is 8th January. The earliest scene of his labours in Scotland is supposed to have been Ross and Argyllshire, and he afterwards visited Fife and Perthshire.

The supposed relic of St. Fillan, which was in the possession of one Malice Doire or Dewar, who emigrated to Canada in 1795, was rediscovered by Dr. Daniel Wilson in 1859, and is now in the Museum of the Society of Antiquaries at Edinburgh. See Dr. Joseph Anderson's *Scotland in Early Christian Times* (1881), i. 216-24; *Archæologica Scotica* (1831), iii. 289-93; and *Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland*, iii. (1862) 233-4, and xii. (1878) 122-182.]

THE EVE OF ST. JOHN

BY WALTER SCOTT

SMAYLHO'ME, or Smallholm Tower, the scene of the following ballad, is situated on the northern boundary of Roxburghshire, among a cluster of wild rocks, called Sandiknow [1]-Crags, the property of Hugh Scott, Esq. of Harden. The tower is a high square building, surrounded by an outer wall, now ruinous. The circuit of the outer court, being defended, on three sides, by a precipice and morass, is accessible only from the west, by a steep and rocky path. The apartments, as is usual in a Border keep, or fortress, are placed one above

[1] The farm-house in the immediate vicinity of Smallholm. ['This place is rendered interesting to poetical readers by its having been the residence, in early life, of Mr. Walter Scott, who has celebrated it in his "Eve of St. John." To it he probably alludes in the Introduction to the third canto of *Marmion*:—

"Then rise those crags, that mountain tower,
Which charmed my fancy's wakening hour."'
Scots Mag., March 1809.—J. G. L.]

[It was leased from Scott of Harden (afterwards Lord Polwarth) by Scott's paternal grandfather. Scott states that it was from it that his consciousness of existence dated. He was brought thither in his third year. 'There is a story,' says Lockhart, 'of his having been forgotten one day among the knolls when a thunder-storm came on; and his aunt, suddenly recollecting his situation, and running out to bring him home, is said to have found him lying on his back, clapping his hands at the lightning, and crying out, 'Bonny! bonny,' at every flash (*Life of Scott*).]

another, and communicate by a narrow stair; on the roof are two bartizans, or platforms, for defence or pleasure. The inner door of the tower is wood, the outer an iron gate; the distance between them being nine feet, the thickness, namely, of the wall. From the elevated situation of Smaylho'me Tower, it is seen many miles in every direction. Among the crags by which it is surrounded, one, more eminent, is called the *Watchfold*, and is said to have been the station of a beacon, in the times of war with England. Without the tower-court is a ruined chapel. Brotherstone is a heath, in the neighbourhood of Smaylho'me Tower.[1]

This ballad was first printed in Mr. Lewis's *Tales of Wonder*. It is here published, with some additional illustrations, particularly an account of the battle of Ancrum Moor; which seemed proper in a work upon Border antiquities. The catastrophe of the tale is founded upon a well-known Irish tradition.[2] This ancient fortress and its vicinity

[1] [Smailholm Tower is supposed to be the prototype of Avenel Castle. According to Lockhart (*Life of Scott*), the ballad 'was written at Mertoun House in the autumn of 1799. Some dilapidations had taken place in the tower of Smailholm, and Harden, being informed of the fact, and entreated with needless earnestness by his kinsman to arrest the hand of the spoiler, requested playfully a ballad, of which Smailholm should be the scene, as the price of his assent.']

[2] The following passage, in Dr. Henry More's *Appendix to the Antidote against Atheism*, relates to a similar phenomenon: 'I confess, that the bodies of devils may not only be warm, but sindgingly hot, as it was in him that took one of Melancthon's relations by the hand, and so scorched her, that she bare the mark of it to her dying day. But the examples of cold are more frequent; as in that famous story of Cuntius, when he touched the arm of a certain woman of Pentoch, as she lay in her bed, he felt as cold as ice; and so did the spirit's claw to Anne Styles.'—Ed. 1662, p. 135.

formed the scene of the Editor's infancy, and seemed to claim from him this attempt to celebrate them in a Border tale.[1]

[1] [See the Introduction to the third canto of *Marmion*. . . .

'It was a barren scene and wild,
Where naked cliffs were rudely piled;
But ever and anon between
Lay velvet tufts of softest green;
And well the lonely infant knew
Recesses where the wallflower grew.'—J. G. L.]

THE EVE OF ST. JOHN

I

THE Baron of Smaylho'me rose with day,
He spurr'd his courser on,
Without stop or stay, down the rocky way,
That leads to Brotherstone.

II

He went not with the bold Buccleuch,
His banner broad to rear;
He went not 'gainst the English yew,
To lift the Scottish spear.

III

Yet his plate-jack[1] was braced, and his helmet was laced,
And his vaunt-brace of proof he wore;
At his saddle-gerthe was a good steel sperthe,
Full ten pound weight and more.

IV

The Baron return'd in three days' space,
And his looks were sad and sour;

[1] The plate-jack is coat-armour; the vaunt-brace, or wam-brace, armour for the body; the sperthe, a battle-axe.

And weary was his courser's pace,
As he reached his rocky tower.

V

He came not from where Ancrum Moor[1]
Ran red with English blood;
Where the Douglas true, and the bold Buccleuch,
'Gainst keen Lord Evers stood.

VI

Yet was his helmet hack'd and hew'd,
His acton pierced and tore;
His axe and his dagger with blood embrued,—
But it was not English gore.

VII

He lighted at the Chapellage,
He held him close and still;
And he whistled thrice for his little foot-page,
His name was English Will.

VIII

Come thou hither, my little foot-page;
Come hither to my knee;
Though thou art young, and tender of age,
I think thou art true to me.

[1] See an account of the battle of Ancrum Moor, subjoined to the ballad.

IX

'Come, tell me all that thou hast seen,
And look thou tell me true!
Since I from Smaylho'me tower have been,
What did thy lady do?'

X

'My lady, each night, sought the lonely light,
That burns on the wild Watchfold;
For, from height to height, the beacons bright
Of the English foemen told.

XI

'The bittern clamour'd from the moss,
The wind blew loud and shrill;
Yet the craggy pathway she did cross,
To the eiry Beacon Hill.

XII

'I watched her steps, and silent came,
Where she sat her on a stone;
No watchman stood by the dreary flame;
It burned all alone.

XIII

'The second night I kept her in sight,
Till to the fire she came,
And, by Mary's might! an Armèd Knight
Stood by the lonely flame.

XIV

'And many a word that warlike lord
Did speak to my lady there;
But the rain fell fast, and loud blew the blast,
And I heard not what they were.

XV

'The third night there the sky was fair,
And the mountain-blast was still,
As again I watch'd the secret pair,
On the lonesome Beacon Hill.

XVI

'And I heard her name the midnight hour,
And name this holy eve;
And say, "Come this night to thy lady's bower;
Ask no bold Baron's leave.

XVII

'"He lifts his spear with the bold Buccleuch;
His lady is all alone;
The door she 'll undo, to her knight so true,
On the eve of good St. John."

XVIII

'"I cannot come; I must not come;
I dare not come to thee;
On the eve of St. John I must wander alone:
In thy bower I may not be."

XIX

'"Now, out on thee, faint-hearted knight!
Thou shouldst not say me nay;
For the eve is sweet, and when lovers meet,
Is worth the whole summer's day.

XX

'"And I'll chain the bloodhound, and the warder
shall not sound,
And rushes shall be strew'd on the stair;
So, by the black rood-stone,[1] and by holy St. John,
I conjure thee, my love, to be there!"

XXI

'"Though the bloodhound be mute, and the rush
beneath my foot,
And the warder his bugle should not blow,
Yet there sleepeth a priest in the chamber to the
east,
And my footstep he would know."

XXII

'"O fear not the priest, who sleepeth to the east!
For to Dryburgh[2] the way he has ta'en;

[1] The black-rood of Melrose was a crucifix of black marble, and of superior sanctity.

[2] Dryburgh Abbey is beautifully situated on the banks of the Tweed. After its dissolution, it became the property of the Halliburtons of Newmains, and is now the seat of the Right Honourable the Earl of Buchan. It belonged to the order of Premonstratenses. [The ancient Barons of Newmains were ultimately represented by Sir Walter Scott, whose remains now repose in their cemetery at Dryburgh.—J. G. L.]

And there to say mass, till three days do pass,
For the soul of a knight that is slayne."

XXIII

'He turn'd him around, and grimly he frown'd,
Then he laugh'd right scornfully—
"He who says the mass-rite for the soul of that knight,
May as well say mass for me:

XXIV

'"At the lone midnight hour, when bad spirits have power,
In thy chamber will I be."
With that he was gone, and my lady left alone,
And no more did I see.'

XXV

Then changed, I trow, was that bold Baron's brow,
From the dark to the blood-red high;
'Now, tell me the mien of the knight thou hast seen,
For, by Mary, he shall die!'

XXVI

'His arms shone full bright, in the beacon's red light;
His plume it was scarlet and blue;
On his shield was a hound, in a silver leash bound,
And his crest was a branch of the yew.'

XXVII

'Thou liest, thou liest, thou little foot-page,
Loud dost thou lie to me!
For that knight is cold, and low laid in the mould,
All under the Eildon-tree.'[1]

XXVIII

'Yet hear but my word, my noble lord!
For I heard her name his name;
And that lady bright, she called the knight,
Sir Richard of Coldinghame.'

XXIX

The bold Baron's brow then changed, I trow,
From high blood-red to pale—
'The grave is deep and dark—and the corpse is
stiff and stark—
So I may not trust thy tale.

XXX

'Where fair Tweed flows round holy Melrose,
And Eildon slopes to the plain,
Full three nights ago, by some secret foe,
That gay gallant was slain.

[1] Eildon is a high hill, terminating in three conical summits, immediately above the town of Melrose, where are the admired ruins of a magnificent monastery. Eildon-tree is said to be the spot where Thomas the Rhymer uttered his prophecies. See *ante*, p. 83.

XXXI

'The varying light deceived thy sight,
And the wild winds drown'd the name;
For the Dryburgh bells ring, and the white monks do sing,
For Sir Richard of Coldinghame!'

XXXII

He pass'd the court-gate, and he oped the tower-grate,
And he mounted the narrow stair,
To the bartizan seat, where, with maids that on her wait,
He found his lady fair.

XXXIII

That lady sat in mournful mood;
Look'd over hill and vale;
Over Tweed's fair flood, and Mertoun's[1] wood,
And all down Teviotdale.

XXXIV

'Now hail, now hail, thou lady bright!'
'Now hail, thou Baron true!
What news, what news, from Ancrum fight?
What news from the bold Buccleuch?'

[1] Mertoun is the beautiful seat of Hugh Scott, Esq., of Harden [afterwards Lord Polwarth].

XXXV

'The Ancrum Moor is red with gore,
For many a southern fell;
And Buccleuch has charged us, evermore,
To watch our beacons well.'

XXXVI

The lady blush'd red, but nothing she said;
Nor added the Baron a word;
Then she stepp'd down the stair to her chamber fair,
And so did her moody lord.

XXXVII

In sleep the lady mourn'd, and the Baron toss'd and turn'd,
And oft to himself he said—
'The worms around him creep, and his bloody grave is deep. . . .
It cannot give up the dead!'

XXXVIII

It was near the ringing of matin-bell,
The night was well-nigh done,
When a heavy sleep on that Baron fell,
On the eve of good St. John.

XXXIX

The lady look'd through the chamber fair,
By the light of a dying flame;
And she was aware of a knight stood there—
Sir Richard of Coldinghame!

XL

'Alas! away, away!' she cried,
'For the Holy Virgin's sake!'
'Lady, I know who sleeps by thy side;
But, lady, he will not awake.

XLI

'By Eildon-tree, for long nights three,
In bloody grave have I lain;
The mass and the death-prayer are said for me,
But, lady, they are said in vain.

XLII

'By the Baron's brand, near Tweed's fair strand,
Most foully slain, I fell;
And my restless sprite on the beacon's height,
For a space is doom'd to dwell.

XLIII

'At our trysting-place,[1] for a certain space,
I must wander to and fro;
But I had not had power to come to thy bower,
Had'st thou not conjured me so.'

[1] *Trysting-place*, place of rendezvous.

XLIV

Love master'd fear—her brow she cross'd;
'How, Richard, hast thou sped?
And art thou saved, or art thou lost?'
The vision shook his head!

XLV

'Who spilleth life, shall forfeit life;
So bid thy lord believe:
That lawless love is guilt above,
This awful sign receive.'

XLVI

He laid his left palm on an oaken beam;
His right upon her hand:
The lady shrunk, and fainting sunk,
For it scorch'd like a fiery brand.

XLVII

The sable score, of fingers four,
Remains on that board impress'd;
And for evermore that lady wore
A covering on her wrist.

XLVIII

There is a nun in Dryburgh bower,
Ne'er looks upon the sun:
There is a monk in Melrose tower,
He speaketh word to none.

XLIX

That nun, who ne'er beholds the day,
That monk, who speaks to none—
That nun was Smaylho'me's Lady gay,
That monk the bold Baron.

NOTES

ON

THE EVE OF ST. JOHN

BATTLE OF ANCRUM MOOR

Lord Evers, and Sir Brian Latoun, during the year 1544, committed the most dreadful ravages upon the Scottish frontiers, compelling most of the inhabitants, and especially the men of Liddesdale, to take assurance under the King of England. Upon the 17th November, in that year, the sum-total of their depredations stood thus, in the bloody ledger of Lord Evers :—

Towns, towers, barnekynes, paryshe churches, bastill houses, burned and destroyed,	192
Scots slain, ...	403
Prisoners taken, ...	816
Nolt (cattle), ...	10,386
Shepe, ...	12,492
Nags and geldings, ...	1,296
Gayt, ...	200
Bolls of corn, ...	850
Insight gear, etc. (furniture), an incalculable quantity.	

MURDIN'S *State Papers*, vol. i. p. 51.

For these services Sir Ralph Evers was made a Lord of Parliament. See a strain of exulting congratulation, upon his promotion, poured forth by some contemporary minstrel [Richard Surtees !] in vol. i. p. 365.

The King of England had promised to these two barons a feudal grant of the country, which they had

thus reduced to a desert; upon hearing which, Archibald Douglas, the seventh Earl of Angus, is said to have sworn to write the deed of investiture upon their skins, with sharp pens and bloody ink, in resentment for their having defaced the tombs of his ancestors, at Melrose.—Godscroft. In 1545, Lord Evers and Latoun again entered Scotland, with an army consisting of 3000 mercenaries, 1500 English Borderers, and 700 assured Scottishmen, chiefly Armstrongs, Turnbulls, and other broken clans. In this second incursion, the English generals even exceeded their former cruelty. Evers burned the tower of Broomhouse, with its lady (a noble and aged woman, says Lesley), and her whole family. The English penetrated as far as Melrose, which they had destroyed last year, and which they now again pillaged. As they returned towards Jedburgh, they were followed by Angus, at the head of 1000 horse, who was shortly after joined by the famous Norman Lesley, with a body of Fife-men. The English, being probably unwilling to cross the Teviot, while the Scots hung upon their rear, halted upon Ancrum Moor, above the village of that name; and the Scottish general was deliberating whether to advance or retire, when Sir Walter Scott,[1] of Buccleuch, came up at full speed, with a small, but chosen body of his retainers, the rest of whom were near at hand. By the advice of this experienced warrior (to whose conduct Pitscottie and Buchanan ascribe the

[1] The Editor has found no instance upon record, of this family having taken assurance with England. Hence, they usually suffered dreadfully from the English forays. In August 1544 (the year preceding the battle), the whole lands belonging to Buccleuch, in West Teviotdale, were harried by Evers; the outworks, or barm-kin, of the tower of Branxholm burned; eight Scotts slain, thirty made prisoners, and an immense prey of horses, cattle, and sheep carried off. The lands upon Kale Water, belonging to the same chieftain, were also plundered, and much spoil obtained; 30 Scotts slain, and the Moss Tower (a fortress near Eckford), *smoked very sore*. Thus Buccleuch had a long account to settle at Ancrum Moor.—Murdin's *State Papers*, pp. 45, 46.

success of the engagement), Angus withdrew from the height which he occupied, and drew up his forces behind it, upon a piece of low flat ground, called Panier-heugh, or Paniel-heugh. The spare horses being sent to an eminence in their rear, appeared to the English to be the main body of the Scots, in the act of flight. Under this persuasion, Evers and Latoun hurried precipitately forwards, and, having ascended the hill, which their foes had abandoned, were no less dismayed, than astonished, to find the phalanx of Scottish spearmen drawn up, in firm array, upon the flat ground below. The Scots in their turn became the assailants. A heron, roused from the marshes by the tumult, soared away betwixt the encountering armies: 'O!' exclaimed Angus, 'that I had here my white goss-hawk, that we might all yoke at once!'—Godscroft. The English, breathless and fatigued, having the setting sun and wind full in their faces, were unable to withstand the resolute and desperate charge of the Scottish lances. No sooner had they begun to waver, than their own allies, the assured Borderers, who had been waiting the event, threw aside their red crosses, and, joining their countrymen, made a most merciless slaughter among the English fugitives, the pursuers calling upon each other to 'remember Broomhouse!'—Lesley, p. 478.

In the battle fell Lord Evers, and his son, together with Sir Brian Latoun, and 800 Englishmen, many of whom were persons of rank. A thousand prisoners were taken. Among these was a patriotic alderman of London, Read by name, who, having contumaciously refused to pay his portion of a benevolence demanded from the city by Henry VIII., was sent by royal authority to serve against the Scots. These, at settling his ransom, he found still more exorbitant in their exactions than the monarch.—Redpath's *Border History*, p. 563.

Evers was much regretted by King Henry, who swore to avenge his death upon Angus, against whom he conceived himself to have particular grounds of resentment, on account of favours received by the Earl at his hands.

The answer of Angus was worthy of a Douglas: 'Is our brother-in-law offended,'[1] said he, 'that I, as a good Scotsman, have avenged my ravaged country, and the defaced tombs of my ancestors, upon Ralph Evers? They were better men than he, and I was bound to do no less—and will he take my life for that? Little knows King Henry the skirts of Kirnetable:[2] I can keep myself there against all his English host.'—GODSCROFT.

Such was the noted battle of Ancrum Moor. The spot, on which it was fought, is called Lilyard's Edge, from an Amazonian Scottish woman of that name, who is reported, by tradition, to have distinguished herself in the same manner as Squire Witherington.[3] The old people point out her monument, now broken and defaced. The inscription is said to have been legible within this century, and to have run thus:—

'Fair maiden Lylliard lies under this stane,
Little was her stature, but great was her fame;
Upon the English louns she laid mony thumps,
And, when her legs were cutted off, she fought upon her stumps.'

Vide *Account of the Parish of Melrose.*

It appears, from a passage in Stowe, that an ancestor of Lord Evers held also a grant of Scottish lands from an English monarch. 'I have seen,' says the historian, 'under the broade-seale of the said King Edward I., a manor, called Ketnes, in the countie of Ferfare, in Scotland, and neere the furthest part of the same nation northward, given to John Eure and his heiress, ancestor to the Lord Eure, that now is, for his service done in these partes, with market, etc., dated at Lanercost, the 20th day of October, anno regis, 34.'—STOWE'S *Annals*,

[1] Angus had married the widow of James IV., sister to King Henry VIII.

[2] Kirnetable, now called Cairntable, is a mountainous tract at the head of Douglasdale. [See notes to *Castle Dangerous.*—J. G. L.]

[3] [See 'Chevy Chase.'—J. G. L.]

p. 210. This grant, like that of Henry, must have been dangerous to the receiver.

There is a nun in Dryburgh bower.—St. xlviii. l. 1.

The circumstance of the nun, 'who never saw the day,' is not entirely imaginary. About fifty years ago, an unfortunate female wanderer took up her residence in a dark vault, among the ruins of Dryburgh Abbey, which, during the day, she never quitted. When night fell, she issued from this miserable habitation, and went to the house of Mr. Haliburton of Newmains, the Editor's great-grandfather, or to that of Mr. Erskine of Sheilfield, two gentlemen of the neighbourhood. From their charity she obtained such necessaries as she could be prevailed upon to accept. At twelve, each night, she lighted her candle, and returned to her vault; assuring her friendly neighbours, that, during her absence, her habitation was arranged by a spirit, to whom she gave the uncouth name of *Fatlips*; describing him as a little man, wearing heavy iron shoes, with which he trampled the clay-floor of the vault, to dispel the damps. This circumstance caused her to be regarded, by the well-informed, with compassion, as deranged in her understanding; and by the vulgar, with some degree of terror. The cause of her adopting this extraordinary mode of life she would never explain. It was, however, believed to have been occasioned by a vow, that, during the absence of a man, to whom she was attached, she would never look upon the sun. Her lover never returned. He fell during the civil war of 1745-6, and she never more would behold the light of day.

The vault, or rather dungeon, in which this unfortunate woman lived and died, passes still by the name of the supernatural being, with which its gloom was tenanted by her disturbed imagination, and few of the neighbouring peasants dare enter it by night. 1803.

CADYOW CASTLE

BY SIR WALTER SCOTT

The ruins of Cadyow, or Cadzow Castle, the ancient baronial residence of the family of Hamilton, are situated upon the precipitous banks of the river Evan, about two miles above its junction with the Clyde. It was dismantled, in the conclusion of the Civil Wars, during the reign of the unfortunate Mary, to whose cause the house of Hamilton devoted themselves with a generous zeal, which occasioned their temporary obscurity, and, very nearly, their total ruin. The situation of the ruins, embosomed in wood, darkened by ivy and creeping shrubs, and overhanging the brawling torrent, is romantic in the highest degree. In the immediate vicinity of Cadyow is a grove of immense oaks, the remains of the Caledonian Forest, which anciently extended through the south of Scotland, from the eastern to the Atlantic Ocean. Some of these trees measure twenty-five feet, and upwards, in circumference; and the state of decay, in which they now appear, shows that they may have witnessed the rites of the Druids. The whole scenery is included in the magnificent and extensive park of the Duke of Hamilton. There was long preserved in this forest the breed of the Scottish wild cattle, until their ferocity occasioned their being extirpated, about forty years ago. Their appearance was beautiful, being milk-white, with black muzzles,

horns, and hoofs. The bulls are described by ancient authors as having white manes; but those of latter days had lost that peculiarity, perhaps by intermixture with the tame breed.[1]

In detailing the death of the Regent Murray, which is made the subject of the following ballad, it would be injustice to my reader to use other words than those of Dr. Robertson, whose account of that memorable event forms a beautiful piece of historical painting.

'Hamilton of Bothwellhaugh was the person who committed this barbarous action. He had been condemned to death soon after the battle of Langside, as we have already related, and owed his life to the Regent's clemency. But part of his estate had been bestowed upon one of the Regent's favourites,[2] who seized his house, and turned out his wife, naked, in a cold night, into the open fields, where, before next morning, she became furiously mad.[3] This injury made a deeper impression on him than the benefit he had received, and from that moment he vowed to be revenged of the Regent. Party rage strengthened and inflamed his private resentment. His kinsmen, the Hamiltons, applauded the enter-

[1] They were formerly kept in the park at Drumlanrig, and are still to be seen at Chillingham Castle, in Northumberland. For their nature and ferocity, see Notes. [They are still kept at Cadyow.]

[2] This was Sir James Bellenden, Lord Justice-Clerk, whose shameful and inhuman rapacity occasioned the catastrophe in the text.—Spottiswoode.

[3] [There is much exaggeration and misrepresentation in the story as told by Robertson. Bellenden was the uncle of Hamilton's wife, and the estates may have been conveyed to him to save them from forfeiture. Bellenden may have expelled his niece; but she was alive and sane thirty years after Langside. See *Acta Parl. Scot.* iv. 354.]

prise. The maxims of that age justified the most desperate course he could take to obtain vengeance. He followed the Regent for some time, and watched for an opportunity to strike the blow. He resolved, at last, to wait till his enemy should arrive at Linlithgow, through which he was to pass, in his way from Stirling to Edinburgh. He took his stand in a wooden gallery,[1] which had a window towards the street; spread a feather-bed on the floor, to hinder the noise of his feet from being heard; hung up a black cloth behind him, that his shadow might not be observed from without; and, after all this preparation, calmly expected the Regent's approach, who had lodged, during the night, in a house not far distant. Some indistinct information of the danger which threatened him had been conveyed to the Regent, and he paid so much regard to it, that he resolved to return by the same gate through which he had entered, and to fetch a compass round the town. But, as the crowd about the gate was great, and he himself unacquainted with fear, he proceeded directly along the street; and the throng of people obliging him to move very slowly, gave the assassin time to take so true an aim, that he shot him, with a single bullet, through the lower part of his belly, and killed the horse of a gentleman who rode on his other side. His followers instantly endeavoured to break into the house, whence the blow had come; but they found the

[1] This projecting gallery is still shown. The house, to which it was attached, was the property of the Archbishop of St. Andrews, a natural brother to the Duke of Chatelherault, and uncle to Bothwellhaugh. This, among many other circumstances, seems to evince the aid which Bothwellhaugh received from his clan in effecting his purpose. [The site of the house is now occupied by the County Court Buildings.]

door strongly barricaded, and, before it could be forced open, Hamilton had mounted a fleet horse,[1] which stood ready for him at a back passage, and was got far beyond their reach. The Regent died the same night of his wound.'—*History of Scotland*, book v.

Bothwellhaugh rode straight to Hamilton, where he was received in triumph; for the ashes of the houses in Clydesdale, which had been burned by Murray's army, were yet smoking; and party prejudice, the habits of the age, and the enormity of the provocation, seemed, to his kinsmen, to justify his deed. After a short abode at Hamilton, this fierce and determined man left Scotland, and served in France, under the patronage of the family of Guise, to whom he was doubtless recommended by having avenged the cause of their niece, Queen Mary, upon her ungrateful brother. De Thou has recorded, that an attempt was made to engage him to assassinate Gasparde Coligni, the famous Admiral of France, and the buckler of the Huguenot cause. But the character of Bothwellhaugh was mistaken. He was no mercenary trader in blood, and rejected the offer with contempt and indignation. He had no authority, he said, from Scotland, to commit murders in France; he had avenged his own just quarrel, but he would neither, for price nor prayer, avenge that of another man.—*Thuanus*, cap. 46.

The Regent's death happened 23d January 1569 [1569-70]. It is applauded or stigmatised, by contemporary historians, according to their religious or party prejudices. The triumph of Blackwood is unbounded. He not only extols the pious feat of

[1] The gift of Lord John Hamilton, commendator of Arbroath.

Bothwellhaugh, 'who,' he observes, 'satisfied, with a single ounce of lead, him, whose sacrilegious avarice had stripped the metropolitan church of St. Andrews of its covering'; but he ascribes it to immediate divine inspiration, and the escape of Hamilton to little less than the miraculous interference of the Deity.—*Jebb*, vol. ii. p. 263. With equal injustice, it was, by others, made the ground of a general national reflection; for, when Mather urged Berney to assassinate Burleigh, and quoted the examples of Poltrot and Bothwellhaugh, the other conspirator answered, 'that neyther Poltrot nor Hambleton did attempt their enterpryse, without some reason or consideration to lead them to it: as the one, by hyre, and promise of preferment or rewarde; the other, upon desperate mind of revenge, for a lytle wrong done unto him, as the report goethe, accordinge to the vyle trayterous dysposysyon of the hoole natyon of the Scottes.'—MURDIN'S *State Papers*, vol. i. p. 197.

CADYOW CASTLE

ADDRESSED TO

THE RIGHT HONOURABLE

LADY ANNE HAMILTON[1]

BY THE EDITOR

I

When princely Hamilton's abode
Ennobled Cadyow's Gothic towers,
The song went round, the goblet flow'd,
And revel sped the laughing hours.

II

Then, thrilling to the harp's gay sound,
So sweetly rung each vaulted wall,
And echoed light the dancer's bound,
As mirth and music cheer'd the hall.

III

But Cadyow's towers, in ruins laid,
And vaults, by ivy mantled o'er,
Thrill to the music of the shade,
Or echo Evan's hoarser roar.

[1] [Eldest daughter of Archibald, 9th Duke of Hamilton. J. G. L.]

IV

Yet still, of Cadyow's faded fame,
You bid me tell a minstrel tale,
And tune my harp, of Border frame,
On the wild banks of Evandale.

V

For thou, from scenes of courtly pride,
From pleasure's lighter scenes, canst turn,
To draw oblivion's pall aside,
And mark the long-forgotten urn.

VI

Then, noble maïd! at thy command,
Again the crumbled halls shall rise;
Lo! as on Evan's banks we stand,
The past returns—the present flies.

VII

Where, with the rock's wood-cover'd side,
Were blended late the ruins green,
Rise turrets in fantastic pride,
And feudal banners flaunt between:

VIII

Where the rude torrent's brawling course
Was shagg'd with thorn and tangling sloe,
The ashler buttress braves its force,
And ramparts frown in battled row.

IX

'Tis night—the shade of keep and spire
Obscurely dance on Evan's stream,
And on the wave the warder's fire
Is chequering the moonlight beam.

X

Fades slow their light; the east is grey;
The weary warder leaves his tower;
Steeds snort; uncoupled stag-hounds bay,
And merry hunters quit the bower.

XI

The drawbridge falls—they hurry out—
Clatters each plank and swinging chain,
As, dashing o'er, the jovial rout
Urge the shy steed, and slack the rein.

XII

First of his troop, the Chief rode on;
His shouting merry-men throng behind;
The steed of princely Hamilton
Was fleeter than the mountain wind.

XIII

From the thick copse the roebucks bound,
The startling red-deer scuds the plain,
For the hoarse bugle's warrior sound
Has roused their mountain haunts again

XIV

Through the huge oaks of Evandale,
Whose limbs a thousand years have worn,
What sullen roar comes down the gale,
And drowns the hunter's pealing horn?

XV

Mightiest of all the beasts of chase,
That roam in woody Caledon,
Crashing the forest in his race,
The Mountain Bull comes thundering on.

XVI

Fierce, on the hunters' quiver'd band,
He rolls his eyes of swarthy glow,
Spurns, with black hoof and horn, the sand,
And tosses high his mane of snow.

XVII

Aim'd well, the Chieftain's lance has flown;
Struggling in blood the savage lies;
His roar is sunk in hollow groan—
Sound, merry huntsmen! sound the *pryse!*[1]

XVIII

'Tis noon—against the knotted oak
The hunters rest the idle spear;
Curls through the trees the slender smoke,
Where yeomen dight the woodland cheer.

[1] *Pryse*, the note blown at the death of the game.

XIX

Proudly the Chieftain mark'd his clan,
On greenwood lap all careless thrown,
Yet miss'd his eye the boldest man,
That bore the name of Hamilton.

XX

'Why fills not Bothwellhaugh his place,
Still wont our weal and woe to share?
Why comes he not our sport to grace?
Why shares he not our hunters' fare?'

XXI

Stern Claud replied, with darkening face
(Grey Paisley's haughty lord was he),
'At merry feast, or buxom chase,
No more the warrior wilt thou see.

XXII

'Few suns have set, since Woodhouselee
Saw Bothwellhaugh's bright goblets foam,
When to his hearths, in social glee,
The war-worn soldier turn'd him home.

XXIII

'There, wan from her maternal throes,
His Margaret, beautiful and mild,
Sate in her bower, a pallid rose,
And peaceful nursed her new-born child.

XXIV

'O change accurs'd! past are those days;
False Murray's ruthless spoilers came,
And, for the hearth's domestic blaze,
Ascends destruction's volumed flame.

XXV

'What sheeted phantom wanders wild,
Where mountain Eske through woodland flows,
Her arms enfold a shadowy child—
Oh is it she, the pallid rose?

XXVI

'The wilder'd traveller sees her glide,
And hears her feeble voice with awe—
"Revenge," she cries, "on Murray's pride!
And woe for injured Bothwellhaugh!"'

XXVII

He ceased—and cries of rage and grief
Burst mingling from the kindred band,
And half arose the kindling Chief,
And half unsheath'd his Arran brand.

XXVIII

But who, o'er bush, o'er stream and rock,
Rides headlong, with resistless speed,
Whose bloody poniard's frantic stroke
Drives to the leap his jaded steed;

XXIX

Whose cheek is pale, whose eyeballs glare,
As one some visioned sight that saw,
Whose hands are bloody, loose his hair?—
'Tis he! 'tis he! 'tis Bothwellhaugh.

XXX

From gory selle,[1] and reeling steed,
Sprung the fierce horseman with a bound,
And, reeking from the recent deed,
He dash'd his carbine on the ground.

XXXI

Sternly he spoke—'Tis sweet to hear
In good greenwood the bugle blown,
But sweeter to Revenge's ear,
To drink a tyrant's dying groan.

XXXII

'Your slaughtered quarry proudly trode,
At dawning morn, o'er dale and down,
But prouder base-born Murray rode
Thro' old Linlithgow's crowded town.

XXXIII

'From the wild Border's humbled side,
In haughty triumph, marchèd he,
While Knox relaxed his bigot pride,
And smiled, the traitorous pomp to see.

[1] *Selle*, saddle. A word used by Spenser, and other ancient authors.

XXXIV

'But can stern Power, with all his vaunt,
Or Pomp, with all her courtly glare,
The settled heart of Vengeance daunt,
Or change the purpose of Despair?

XXXV

'With hackbut bent,[1] my secret stand,
Dark as the purposed deed, I chose,
And mark'd, where, mingling in his band,
Troop'd Scottish pikes and English bows.

XXXVI

'Dark Morton, girt with many a spear,
Murder's foul minion, led the van;
And clash'd their broadswords in the rear,
The wild Macfarlanes' plaided clan.

XXXVII

'Glencairn and stout Parkhead were nigh,
Obsequious at their Regent's rein,
And haggard Lindesay's iron eye,
That saw fair Mary weep in vain.

XXXVIII

''Mid pennon'd spears, a steely grove,
Proud Murray's plumage floated high;
Scarce could his trampling charger move,
So close the minions crowded nigh.

[1] *Hackbut bent*, gun cock'd.

XXXIX

'From the raised vizor's shade, his eye,
Dark-rolling, glanced the ranks along,
And his steel truncheon, waved on high,
Seem'd marshalling the iron throng.

XL

'But yet his sadden'd brow confess'd
A passing shade of doubt and awe;
Some fiend was whispering in his breast,
Beware of injured Bothwellhaugh!'

XLI

'The death-shot parts—the charger springs—
Wild rises tumult's startling roar!
And Murray's plumy helmet rings—
Rings on the ground, to rise no more.

XLII

'What joy the raptured youth can feel,
To hear her love the loved one tell—
Or he, who broaches on his steel
The wolf, by whom his infant fell!

XLIII

'But dearer, to my injured eye,
To see in dust proud Murray roll;
And mine was ten times trebled joy,
To hear him groan his felon soul.

XLIV

'My Margaret's spectre glided near;
With pride her bleeding victim saw;
And shriek'd in his death-deafen'd ear,
"Remember injured Bothwellhaugh!"

XLV

'Then speed thee, noble Chatlerault!
Spread to the wind thy banner'd tree!
Each warrior bend his Clydesdale bow!—
Murray is fall'n, and Scotland free.'

XLVI

Vaults every warrior to his steed;
Loud bugles join their wild acclaim—
'Murray is fall'n, and Scotland freed!
Couch, Arran! couch thy spear of flame!'

XLVII

But, see! the minstrel vision fails—
The glimmering spears are seen no more;
The shouts of war die on the gales,
Or sink in Evan's lonely roar.

XLVIII

For the loud bugle, pealing high,
The blackbird whistles down the vale,
And sunk in ivied ruins lie
The banner'd towers of Evandale.

XLIX

For Chiefs, intent on bloody deed,
And Vengeance shouting o'er the slain,
Lo! high-born Beauty rules the steed,
Or graceful guides the silken rein.

L

And long may Peace and Pleasure own
The maids who list the minstrel's tale;
Nor e'er a ruder guest be known
On the fair banks of Evandale!

NOTES

ON

CADYOW CASTLE

First of his troop, the Chief rode on.—St. xii. l. 1.

The head of the family of Hamilton, at this period, was James, Earl of Arran, Duke of Chatelherault, in France, and first peer of the Scottish realm. In 1569 he was appointed by Queen Mary her lieutenant-general in Scotland, under the singular title of her adopted father.

The Mountain Bull comes thundering on.—St. xv. l. 4.

In Caledonia olim frequens erat sylvestris quidam bos, nunc vero rarior, qui, colore candidissimo, jubam densam et demissam instar leonis gestat, truculentus, ac ferus ab humano genere abhorrens, ut quæcunque homines vel manibus contrectârint, vel halitu perflaverint, ab iis multos post dies omnino abstinuerunt. Ad hoc tanta audacia huic bovi indita erat, ut non solum irritatus equites furenter prosterneret, sed etiam ne tantillum lacessitus omnes promiscue homines cornibus ac ungulis peteret; ac canum, qui apud nos ferocissimi sunt, impetus plane contemneret. Ejus carnes cartilaginosæ, sed saporis suavissimi. Erat is olim per illam vastissimam Caledoniæ sylvam frequens, sed humana ingluvie jam assumptus, tribus tantum locis est reliquus, Strivilingii, Cumbernaldiæ, et Kincarniæ.—Leslæus, Scotiæ Descriptio, p. 13. [See a note on *Castle Dangerous.*—J. G. L.]

Stern Claud replied, with darkening face
(Grey Paisley's haughty lord was he).—St. xxi. ll. 1-2.

Lord Claud Hamilton, second son of the Duke of Chatelherault, and commendator of the Abbey of Paisley, acted a distinguished part during the troubles of Queen Mary's reign, and remained unalterably attached to the cause of that unfortunate princess. He led the van of her army at the fatal battle of Langside, and was one of the commanders at the Raid of Stirling, which had so nearly given complete success to the Queen's faction. He was ancestor of the present Marquis of Abercorn. [Lord Claud was the fourth son.]

Few suns have set, since Woodhouselee.—St. xxii. l. 1.

This barony, stretching along the banks of the Eske, near Auchendinny, belonged to Bothwellhaugh, in right of his wife. The ruins of the mansion, from whence she was expelled in the brutal manner which occasioned her death, are still to be seen in a hollow glen beside the river. Popular report tenants them with the restless ghost of the Lady Bothwellhaugh; whom, however, it confounds with Lady Anne Bothwell, whose *Lament* is so popular. This spectre is so tenacious of her rights, that, a part of the stones of the ancient edifice having been employed in building or repairing the present Woodhouselee, she has deemed it a part of her privilege to haunt that house also; and, even of very late years, has excited considerable disturbance and terror among the domestics. This is a more remarkable vindication of the *right of ghosts*, as the present Woodhouselee, which gives his title to the honourable Alexander Fraser Tytler, a senator of the College of Justice, is situated on the slope of the Pentland Hills, distant at least four miles from her proper abode. She always appears in white, and with her child in her arms.

[As already stated, the lady survived her expulsion—if she was expelled—more than thirty years. Nor has the *Lament* any connection either with Lady Anne Bothwell, or Lady Anne of Bothwellhaugh. It is derived from

the 'Sweet Lullabie,' published by Breton, in *The Arbor of Amorous Deuices*, 7th January 1593-4:—

'Come, little babe, come, silly soule,
Thy father's shame, thy mother's griefe,
Borne as I doubt to all our dole,
And to thy selfe unhappie chiefe:
Sing lullabie and lap it warme,
Poore soule, that thinkes no creature harme!' etc.

There are many derivatives, including a poem in Elizabeth Rogers's *Virginal Book*: 'Balow, my boy, lye still and sleep'; another with music in John Gamble's MS. (1649): 'Ballowe, my babe, lye still and sleepe'; and a very rare black-letter (1626-7) in the Roxburghe Collection, entitled 'The New Balow' (see Ebsworth's *Roxburghe Ballads*, vi. 575-580).]

Whose bloody poniard's frantic stroke
Drives to the leap his jaded steed.—St. xxviii. ll. 3-4.

Birrel informs us, that Bothwellhaugh, being closely pursued, 'after that spur and wand had failed him, he drew forth his dagger, and strocke his horse behind, whilk caused the horse to leap a very brode stank [*i.e.* ditch], by whilk means he escapit, and gat away from all the rest of the horses.'—BIRREL'S *Diary*, p. 18.

From the wild Border's humbled side,
In haughty triumph, marchèd he.—St. xxxiii. ll. 1-2.

Murray's death took place shortly after an expedition to the Borders; which is thus commemorated by the author of his elegy:—

'So having stablischt all thing in this sort,
To Liddisdaill agane he did resort,
Throw Ewisdaill, Eskdail, and all the dailles rode he,
And also lay three nights in Cannabie,
Whair na prince lay thir hundred yeiris before.
Nae thief durst stir, they did him feir sa sair;
And, that thay suld na mair thair thift allege,
Threescore and twelf he brocht of thame in pledge,
Syne wardit thame, whilk maid the rest keep ordour,
Than mycht the rasch-bus keep ky on the Bordour.'
Scottish Poems, 16th century, p. 232.

With hackbut bent, my secret stand.—St. xxxv. l. 1.

The carbine, with which the Regent was shot, is preserved at Hamilton Palace. It is a brass piece, of a middling length, very small in the bore, and, what is rather extraordinary, appears to have been rifled or indented in the barrel. It had a matchlock, for which a modern firelock has been injudiciously substituted.

Dark Morton, girt with many a spear.—St. xxxvi. l. 1.

Of this noted person, it is enough to say, that he was active in the murder of David Rizzio, and at least privy to that of Darnley.

The wild Macfarlanes' plaided clan.—St. xxxvi. l. 4.

This clan of Lennox Highlanders were attached to the Regent Murray. Holinshed, speaking of the battle of Langside, says, 'In this batayle the valiancie of an Heiland gentleman, named Macfarlane, stood the Regent's part in great steede; for, in the hottest brunte of the fighte, he came up with two hundred of his friendes and countrymen, and so manfully gave in upon the flankes of the Queen's people, that he was a great cause of the disordering of them. This Macfarlane had been lately before, as I have heard, condemned to die, for some outrage by him committed, and obtayning pardon through suyte of the Countess of Murray, he recompenced that clemencie by this piece of service now at this batayle.' Calderwood's account is less favourable to the Macfarlanes. He states that 'Macfarlane, with his Highlandmen, fled from the wing where they were set. The Lord Lindsay, who stood nearest to them in the Regent's battle, said, "Let them go! I shall fill their place better": and so, stepping forward, with a company of fresh men, charged the enemy, whose spears were now spent, with long weapons, so that they were driven back by force, being before almost overthrown by the avauntguard and harquebusiers, and so were turned to flight.' —Calderwood's *MS. apud* Keith, p. 480. Melville mentions the flight of the vanguard, but states it to have

been commanded by Morton, and composed chiefly of commoners of the barony of Renfrew.

Glencairn and stout Parkhead were nigh,
Obsequious at their Regent's rein.—St. xxxvii. ll. 1-2.

The Earl of Glencairn was a steady adherent of the Regent. George Douglas of Parkhead was a natural brother of the Earl of Morton, whose horse was killed by the same ball by which Murray fell.

And haggard Lindesay's iron eye,
That saw fair Mary weep in vain.—St. xxxvii. ll. 3-4.

Lord Lindsay, of the Byres, was the most ferocious and brutal of the Regent's faction, and, as such, was employed to extort Mary's signature to the deed of resignation presented to her in Lochleven Castle. He discharged his commission with the most savage rigour: and it is even said, that when the weeping captive, in the act of signing, averted her eyes from the fatal deed, he pinched her arm with the grasp of his iron glove.

Scarce could his trampling charger move,
So close the minions crowded nigh.—St. xxxviii. ll. 3-4.

Not only had the Regent notice of the intended attempt upon his life, but even of the very house from which it was threatened. With that infatuation at which men wonder, after such events have happened, he deemed it would be a sufficient precaution to ride briskly past the dangerous spot. But even this was prevented by the crowd: so that Bothwellhaugh had time to take a deliberate aim.—Spottiswoode, p. 233. Buchanan.

Spread to the wind thy banner'd tree!—St. xlv. l. 2.

An oak, half-sawn, with the motto *through*, is an ancient cognisance of the family of Hamilton.

THE GRAY BROTHER

A FRAGMENT

BY SIR WALTER SCOTT

THE imperfect state of this ballad, which was written several years ago, is not a circumstance affected for the purpose of giving it that peculiar interest, which is often found to arise from ungratified curiosity. On the contrary, it was the Editor's intention to have completed the tale, if he had found himself able to succeed to his own satisfaction. Yielding to the opinion of persons, whose judgment, if not biassed by the partiality of friendship, is entitled to deference, the Editor has preferred inserting these verses as a fragment, to his intention of entirely suppressing them.

The tradition, upon which the tale is founded, regards a house upon the barony of Gilmerton, near Lasswade, in Mid-Lothian. This building, now called Gilmerton Grange, was originally named Burndale, from the following tragic adventure. The barony of Gilmerton belonged, of yore, to a gentleman named Heron, who had one beautiful daughter. This young lady was seduced by the Abbot of Newbattle, a richly endowed abbey, upon

the banks of the South Esk, now a seat of the Marquis of Lothian. Heron came to the knowledge of this circumstance, and learned also, that the lovers carried on their guilty intercourse by the connivance of the lady's nurse, who lived at this house of Gilmerton Grange, or Burndale. He formed a resolution of bloody vengeance, undeterred by the supposed sanctity of the clerical character, or by the stronger claims of natural affection. Choosing, therefore, a dark and windy night, when the objects of his vengeance were engaged in a stolen interview, he set fire to a stack of dried thorns, and other combustibles, which he had caused to be piled against the house, and reduced to a pile of glowing ashes the dwelling, with all its inmates.[1]

The scene with which the ballad opens, was suggested by the following curious passage, extracted from the Life of Alexander Peden, one of the wandering and persecuted teachers of the sect of Cameronians, during the reign of Charles II. and his successor, James. This person was supposed by his followers, and, perhaps, really believed himself, to be possessed of supernatural gifts; for the wild scenes which they frequented, and the constant dangers which were incurred through their proscription, deepened upon their minds the gloom of superstition, so general in that age.

'About the same time he [Peden] came to Andrew Normand's house, in the parish of Alloway,

[1] This tradition was communicated to me by John Clerk, Esq. of Eldin, author of an *Essay upon Naval Tactics*, who will be remembered by posterity, as having taught the Genius of Britain to concentrate her thunders, and to launch them against her foes with an unerring aim.

in the shire of Ayr, being to preach at night in his barn. After he came in, he halted a little, leaning upon a chair-back, with his face covered; when he lifted up his head, he said, "They are in this house that I have not one word of salvation unto"; he halted a little again, saying, "This is strange, that the devil will not go out, that we may begin our work!" Then there was a woman went out, ill-looked upon almost all her life, and to her dying hour, for a witch, with many presumptions of the same. It escaped me, in the former passages, that John Muirhead (whom I have often mentioned) told me, that when he came from Ireland to Galloway, he was at family-worship, and giving some notes upon the Scripture read, when a very ill-looking man came, and sat down within the door, at the back of the *hallan* [partition of the cottage]: immediately he halted, and said, "There is some unhappy body just now come into this house. I charge him to go out, and not stop my mouth!" The person went out, and he *insisted* (went on), yet he saw him neither come in nor go out.'—*The Life and Prophecies of Mr. Alexander Peden, late Minister of the Gospel at New Glenluce, in Galloway,* part ii. § 26.

A friendly correspondent remarks, 'that the incapacity of proceeding in the performance of a religious duty, when a contaminated person is present, is of much higher antiquity than the era of the Reverend Mr. Alexander Peden.'—*Vide Hygini Fabulas,* cap. 26.

'Medea Corintho exul, Athenas, ad Ægeum Pandionis filium devenit in hospitium, eique nupsit.

——'Postea sacerdos Dianæ Medeam exagitare cœpit, regique negabat sacra caste facere posse, eo quod

in ea civitate esset mulier venefica et scelerata; tunc exulatur.' [1]

[1] [The contemporary criticism on this noble ballad was all feeble, but laudatory, with the exception of the following remark:—'The painter is justly blamed, whose figures do not correspond with his landscape—who assembles banditti in an Elysium, or bathing loves in a lake of storm. The same adaptation of parts is expedient in the poet. The stanzas—

"Sweet are the paths, O passing sweet!"

to

"And classic Hawthornden,"

disagreeably contrast with the mysterious gloomy character of the ballad. Were these omitted, it would merit high rank for the terrific expectation it excites by the majestic introduction, and the awful close.'—*Critical Review*, November 1803.—J. G. L.]

THE GRAY BROTHER

I

THE Pope he was saying the high, high mass,
All on Saint Peter's day,
With the power to him given, by the saints in heaven,
To wash men's sins away.

II

The Pope he was saying the blessed mass,
And the people kneel'd around,
And from each man's soul his sins did pass,
As he kiss'd the holy ground.

III

And all, among the crowded throng,
Was still, both limb and tongue,
While thro' vaulted roof, and aisles aloof,
The holy accents rung.

IV

At the holiest word, he quiver'd for fear,
And falter'd in the sound—
And, when he would the chalice rear,
He dropp'd it to the ground.

v

'The breath of one of evil deed
Pollutes our sacred day;
He has no portion in our creed,
No part in what I say.

vi

'A being, whom no blessed word
To ghostly peace can bring;
A wretch, at whose approach abhorr'd,
Recoils each holy thing.

vii

'Up! up! unhappy! haste, arise!
My adjuration fear!
I charge thee not to stop my voice,
Nor longer tarry here!'

viii

Amid them all a pilgrim kneel'd,
In gown of sackcloth gray;
Far journeying from his native field,
He first saw Rome that day.

ix

For forty days and nights, so drear,
I ween, he had not spoke,
And, save with bread and water clear,
His fast he ne'er had broke.

X

Amid the penitential flock,
Seem'd none more bent to pray;
But, when the Holy Father spoke,
He rose, and went his way.

XI

Again unto his native land,
His weary course he drew,
To Lothian's fair and fertile strand,
And Pentland's mountains blue.

XII

His unblest feet his native seat,
'Mid Eske's fair woods, regain;
Thro' woods more fair no stream more sweet
Rolls to the eastern main.

XIII

And lords to meet the pilgrim came,
And vassals bent the knee;
For all 'mid Scotland's chiefs of fame,
Was none more famed than he.

XIV

And boldly for his country, still,
In battle he had stood,
Ay, even when, on the banks of Till,
Her noblest pour'd their blood.

XV

Sweet are the paths, O passing sweet!
By Eske's fair streams that run,
O'er airy steep, thro' copsewood deep,
Impervious to the sun.

XVI

There the rapt poet's step may rove,
And yield the muse the day;
There Beauty, led by timid Love,
May shun the tell-tale ray;

XVII

From that fair dome, where suit is paid,
By blast of bugle free,
To Auchendinny's hazel glade,
And haunted Woodhouselee.

XVIII

Who knows not Melville's beechy grove,
And Roslin's rocky glen,
Dalkeith, which all the virtues love,
And classic Hawthornden?

XIX

Yet never a path, from day to day,
The pilgrim's footsteps range,
Save but the solitary way
To Burndale's ruin'd grange.

XX

A woeful place was that, I ween,
As sorrow could desire;
For nodding to the fall was each crumbling wall,
And the roof was scathed with fire.

XXI

It fell upon a summer's eve,
While on Carnethy's head,
The last faint gleams of the sun's low beams
Had streak'd the gray with red;

XXII

And the convent-bell did vespers tell,
Newbattle's oaks among,
And mingled with the solemn knell
Our Ladye's evening song:

XXIII

The heavy knell, the choir's faint swell,
Came slowly down the wind,
And on the pilgrim's ear they fell,
As his wonted path he did find.

XXIV

Deep sunk in thought, I ween he was,
Nor ever rais'd his eye,
Until he came to that dreary place,
Which did all in ruins lie.

XXV

He gazed on the walls, so scathed with fire,
With many a bitter groan—
And there was aware of a Gray Friar,
Resting him on a stone.

XXVI

'Now, Christ thee save!' said the Gray Brother;
'Some pilgrim thou seemest to be.'
But in sore amaze did Lord Albert gaze,
Nor answer again made he.

XXVII

'O come ye from east, or come ye from west,
Or bring reliques from over the sea;
Or come ye from the shrine of St. James the divine,
Or St. John of Beverly?'

XXVIII

'I come not from the shrine of St. James the divine,
Nor bring reliques from over the sea;
I bring but a curse from our father, the Pope,
Which for ever will cling to me.'

XXIX

'Now, woeful pilgrim, say not so!
But kneel thee down by me,

And shrive thee so clean of thy deadly sin,
That absolved thou mayst be.'

XXX

'And who art thou, thou Gray Brother,
That I should shrive to thee,
When He, to whom are given the keys of earth and heav'n,
Has no power to pardon me?'

XXXI

'O I am sent from a distant clime,
Five thousand miles away,
And all to absolve a foul, foul crime,
Done *here* 'twixt night and day.'

XXXII

The pilgrim kneel'd him on the sand,
And thus began his saye—
When on his neck an ice-cold hand
Did that Gray Brother laye.

* * * * *

NOTES

ON

THE GRAY BROTHER

From that fair dome, where suit is paid,
By blast of bugle free.—St. xvii. ll. 1-2.

The barony of Pennycuick, the property of Sir George Clerk, Bart., is held by a singular tenure; the proprietor being bound to sit upon a large rocky fragment, called the Buckstane, and wind three blasts of a horn, when the king shall come to hunt on the Borough Muir, near Edinburgh. Hence, the family have adopted, as their crest, a demi-forester proper, winding a horn, with the motto, *Free for a Blast.* The beautiful mansion-house of Pennycuick is much admired, both on account of the architecture and surrounding scenery.

To Auchendinny's hazel glade.—St. xvii. l. 3.

Auchendinny, situated upon the Eske, below Pennycuik, the present residence of the ingenious H. Mackenzie, Esq., author of the *Man of Feeling,* etc. Edition 1803.

And haunted Woodhouselee.—St. xvii. l. 4.

For the traditions connected with this ruinous mansion, see the ballad of *Cadyow Castle,* p. 195.

Who knows not Melville's beechy grove.—St. xviii. l. 1.

Melville Castle, the seat of the Right Honourable Lord Melville, to whom it gives the title of Viscount, is delightfully situated upon the Eske, near Lasswade.

And Roslin's rocky glen.—St. xviii. l. 2.

The ruins of Roslin Castle, the baronial residence of the ancient family of St. Clair; the Gothic Chapel, which is still in beautiful preservation, with the romantic and woody dell in which they are situated, belong to the Right Honourable the Earl of Rosslyn, the representative of the former Lords of Roslin.

Dalkeith, which all the virtues love.—St. xviii. l. 3.

The village and castle of Dalkeith belonged, of old, to the famous Earl of Morton, but is now the residence of the noble family of Buccleuch. The park extends along the Eske, which is there joined by its sister stream, of the same name.

And classic Hawthornden?—St. xviii. l. 4.

Hawthornden, the residence of the poet Drummond. A house, of more modern date, is enclosed, as it were, by the ruins of the ancient castle, and overhangs a tremendous precipice, upon the banks of the Eske, perforated by winding caves, which, in former times, formed a refuge to the oppressed patriots of Scotland. Here Drummond received Ben Jonson, who journeyed from London, on foot, in order to visit him. The beauty of this striking scene has been much injured, of late years, by the indiscriminate use of the axe. The traveller now looks in vain for the leafy bower,

'Where Jonson sate in Drummond's social shade.'

Upon the whole, tracing the Eske from its source, till it joins the sea at Musselburgh, no stream in Scotland can boast such a varied succession of the most interesting objects, as well as of the most romantic and beautiful scenery. 1803. . . . The beautiful scenery of Hawthornden has, since the above note was written, recovered all its proper ornament of wood. 1831.

WAR-SONG

OF THE

ROYAL EDINBURGH LIGHT DRAGOONS

BY SIR WALTER SCOTT

Nennius. Is not peace the end of arms?
Caratach. Not where the cause implies a general conquest.
Had we a difference with some petty isle,
Or with our neighbours, Britons, for our landmarks,
The taking in of some rebellious lord,
Or making head against a slight commotion,
After a day of blood, peace might be argued:
But where we grapple for the land we live on,
The liberty we hold more dear than life,
The gods we worship, and, next these, our honours,
And, with those, swords that know no end of battle—
Those men, beside themselves, allow no neighbour,
Those minds, that, where the day is, claim inheritance,
And, where the sun makes ripe the fruit, their harvest,
And, where they march, but measure out more ground
To add to Rome——
It must not be—No! as they are our foes,
Let's use the peace of honour—that's fair dealing;
But in our hands our swords. The hardy Roman,
That thinks to graft himself into my stock,
Must first begin his kindred under ground,
And be allied in ashes.'—— BONDUCA.

THE following War-Song was written during the apprehension of an invasion.[1] The corps of volunteers, to which it was addressed, was raised

[1] [The song originally appeared in the *Scots Magazine* for 1802.—J. G. L.]

in 1797, consisting of gentlemen, mounted and armed at their own expense. It still subsists, as the Right Troop of the Royal Mid-Lothian Light Cavalry, commanded by the Honourable Lieutenant-Colonel Dundas.[1] The noble and constitutional measure of arming freemen in defence of their own rights was nowhere more successful than in Edinburgh, which furnished a force of 3000 armed and disciplined volunteers, including a regiment of cavalry, from the city and county, and two corps of artillery, each capable of serving twelve guns. To such a force, above all others, might, in similar circumstances, be applied the exhortation of our ancient Galgacus: '*Proinde ituri in aciem, et majores vestros et posteros cogitate.*'

[1] [Sir Walter Scott was, at the time when he wrote this song, Quartermaster of the Edinburgh Light Cavalry. See one of the Epistles Introductory to *Marmion*.—J. G. L.] ['If the recollection of Mr. Skene be accurate,' writes Lockhart in his *Life of Scott*, 'the suggestion'—of the Edinburgh Light Cavalry—'originally proceeded from Scott himself, who certainly had a principal share in its subsequent success.' 'Unable,' wrote Skene—quoted in Lockhart's *Life of Scott*—'by reason of his lameness, to serve amongst his friends on foot, he had nothing for it but to rouse the spirit of the mosstrooper, with which he readily inspired all who possessed the means of substituting the sabre for the musket.'

Chambers, on the authority of an 'individual,' mentions, in his *Life of Scott*, that the 'War-Song was only a subject of ridicule to many individuals of the troop,' and that a party of officers dining together at Musselburgh made it their chief amusement, at a certain period of the night, to repeat the initial line, 'To horse! to horse!' with burlesque expression, and laugh at 'this attempt of Scott's as a piece of supreme absurdity.' This, however, looks like gross exaggeration of a little indulgence in humorous 'chaff.']

WAR-SONG

OF THE

ROYAL EDINBURGH LIGHT DRAGOONS

I

To horse! to horse! the standard flies,
The bugles sound the call;
The Gallic navy stems the seas,
The voice of battle 's on the breeze,
Arouse ye, one and all!

II

From high Dunedin's towers we come,
A band of brothers true;
Our casques the leopard's spoils surround,
With Scotland's hardy thistle crown'd;
We boast the red and blue.[1]

III

Though tamely crouch to Gallia's frown,
Dull Holland's tardy train;
Their ravish'd toys though Romans mourn,
Though gallant Switzers vainly spurn,
And, foaming, gnaw the chain;

[1] The Royal colours.

IV

Oh! had they mark'd the avenging call
Their brethren's murder gave,
Disunion ne'er their ranks had mown,
Nor patriot valour, desperate grown,
Sought freedom in the grave!

V

Shall we, too, bend the stubborn head,
In Freedom's temple born,
Dress our pale cheek in timid smile,
To hail a master in our isle,
Or brook a victor's scorn?

VI

No! though destruction o'er the land
Come pouring as a flood,
The sun, that sees our falling day,
Shall mark our sabres' deadly sway,
And set that night in blood.

VII

For gold let Gallia's legions fight,
Or plunder's bloody gain;
Unbribed, unbought, our swords we draw,
To guard our king, to fence our law,
Nor shall their edge be vain.

VIII

If ever breath of British gale
  Shall fan the tricolor,
Or footstep of invader rude,
With rapine foul, and red with blood,
  Pollute our happy shore,—

IX

Then farewell home! and farewell friends!
  Adieu each tender tie!
Resolved, we mingle in the tide,
Where charging squadrons furious ride,
  To conquer or to die.

X

To horse! to horse! the sabres gleam;
  High sounds our bugle-call;
Combined by honour's sacred tie,
Our word is *Laws and Liberty!*
  March forward, one and all!

NOTE

ON

THE WAR-SONG

Oh! had they mark'd the avenging call
Their brethren's murder gave.—St. iv. ll. 1-2.

The allusion is to the massacre of the Swiss Guards, on the fatal 10th August 1792. It is painful, but not useless, to remark, that the passive temper with which the Swiss regarded the death of their bravest countrymen, mercilessly slaughtered in discharge of their duty, encouraged and authorised the progressive injustice, by which the Alps, once the seat of the most virtuous and free people upon the Continent, have, at length, been converted into the citadel of a foreign and military despot. A state degraded is half enslaved. 1812.

LORD SOULIS

BY J. LEYDEN

THE subject of the following ballad is a popular tale of the Scottish Borders. It refers to transactions of a period so important, as to have left an indelible impression on the popular mind, and almost to have effaced the traditions of earlier times. The fame of Arthur, and the Knights of the Round Table, always more illustrious among the Scottish Borderers, from their Welsh origin, than Fin Maccoul and Gow Macmorne, who seem not, however, to have been totally unknown, yielded gradually to the renown of Wallace, Bruce, Douglas, and the other patriots, who so nobly asserted the liberty of their country. Beyond that period, numerous, but obscure and varying legends, refer to marvellous Merlin, or Myrrdin *the Wild*, and Michael Scott, both magicians of notorious fame. In this instance the enchanters have triumphed over the *true man*. But the charge of magic was transferred from the ancient sorcerers to the objects of popular resentment of every age; and the partisans of the Baliols, the abetters of the English faction, and the enemies of the Protestant and of the Presbyterian reformation, have been indiscriminately stigmatised as necromancers and *warlocks*. Thus, Lord Soulis, Archbishop Sharp, Grierson of Lagg, and Graham of Claverhouse, Viscount Dundee, receive from tradition the same

supernatural attributes. According to Dalrymple,[1] the family of Soulis seem to have been powerful during the contest between Bruce and Baliol; for adhering to the latter of whom they incurred forfeiture. Their power extended over the South and West Marches; and near the Deadrigs,[2] in the parish of Eccles, in the East Marches, their family-bearings still appear on an obelisk. William de Soulis, Justiciarius Loadoniæ, in 1281, subscribed the famous obligation, by which the nobility of Scotland bound themselves to acknowledge the sovereignty of the Maid of Norway, and her descendants. RHYMER, tom. ii. pp. 266, 279; and, in 1291, Nicholas de Soulis appears as a competitor for the crown of Scotland, which he claimed as the heir of Margery, a bastard daughter of Alexander II., and the wife of Allan Durward, or Chuissier.—CARTE, p. 177. DALRYMPLE'S *Annals*, vol. i. p. 203.

But their power was not confined to the Marches; for the barony of Saltoun, in the shire of Haddington, derived its name from the family; being designed Soulistoun, in a charter to the predecessors of Nevoy of that Ilk, seen by Dalrymple; and the same frequently appears among those of the benefactors and witnesses in the chartularies of abbeys, particularly in that of Newbattle. Ranulphus de Soulis occurs as a witness, in a charter, granted by King David, of the teinds of Stirling; and he, or one of his successors, had afterwards the appellation of *Pincerna Regis*. The following notices of

[1] Dalrymple's Collection concerning the Scottish History, p. 395.

[2] Transactions of the Antiquarian Society of Scotland, vol. i. p. 269.

the family and its decline, are extracted from Robertson's *Index of Lost Charters.*[1] Various repetitions occur, as the index is copied from different rolls, which appear to have never been accurately arranged.

Charter to the Abbacie of Melross, of that part of the barony Westerker, quhilk perteint to Lord Soulis—a Rob. I. in vicecom. Melrose.

—— To the Abbey of Craigelton, quhilkis perteint to Lord Soulis—ab eodem—Candidæ Casæ.

—— To John Soullis, knight of the lands of Kirkanders and Brettalach—ab eodem—Dumfries.

—— To John Soullis, knight of the baronie of Torthorald, ab eodem—Dumfries.

—— To John Soullis, of the lands of Kirkanders—ab eodem—Dumfries.

—— To John Soullis, of the barony of Kirkanders—quæ fuit quondam Johannis de Wak, Militis—ab eodem.

—— To James Lord Douglas, the half-lands of the barony of Westerker, in valle de Eske, quilk William Soullis forisfecit—ab eodem.

—— To Robert Stewart, the son and heir of Walter Stewart, the barony of Nisbit, the barony of Longnewton, and Mertoun, and the barony of Cavirton, in vicecomitatu de Roxburgh, quhilk William Soulis forisfecit.

—— To Murdoch Menteith, of the lands of Gilmerton, whilk was William Soullis, in vicecom. de Edinburgh—ab eodem.

[1] Index of many records of charters granted between 1309 and 1413, published by W. Robertson, Esq.

Charter to Robert Bruce, of the lands of Liddesdale, whilk William Soulis erga nos forisfecit—ab eodem.

—— To Robert Bruce, son of the King, the lands of Liddesdail, whilk William Soullis forisfecit erga nos—ab eodem—anno regni 16.

—— To Archibald Douglas, of the baronie of Kirkanders, quilk were John Soullis, in vicecom. de Dumfries.

—— To Murdoch Menteith, of the lands of Gilmerton, quilk Soullis forisfecit, in vicecom. de Edinburgh.

—— Waltero Senescallo Scotiæ of Nesbit (except and the valley of Liddell), the barony of Langnewton and Maxtoun, the barony of Cavertoun, in vicecom. de Roxburgh, quas Soullis forisfecit.

—— To William Lord Douglas, of the lands of Lyddal, whilkis William Soullis forisfecit, a Davide secundo.

—— To James Lord Douglas, of the barony of Westerker, quam Willielmus de Soullis forisfecit.

The hero of tradition seems to be William, Lord Soullis, whose name occurs so frequently in the foregoing list of forfeitures; by which he appears to have possessed the whole district of Liddesdale, with Westerkirk and Kirkandrews, in Dumfriesshire, the lands of Gilmertoun, near Edinburgh, and the rich baronies of Nisbet, Longnewton, Caverton, Maxtoun, and Mertoun, in Roxburghshire. He was of royal descent, being the grandson of Nicholas de Soulis, who claimed the crown of Scotland, in right of his grandmother, daughter to Alexander II.; and who, could her legitimacy have been ascertained,

must have excluded the other competitors. The elder brother of William was John de Soulis, a gallant warrior, warmly attached to the interests of his country, who, with fifty Borderers, defeated and made prisoner Sir Andrew Harclay, at the head of three hundred Englishmen; and was himself slain fighting in the cause of Edward the Bruce, at the battle of Dundalk, in Ireland, 1318. He had been joint-warden of the kingdom with John Cummin, after the abdication of the immortal Wallace, in 1300; in which character he was recognised by John Baliol, who, in a charter granted after his dethronement, and dated at Rutherglen, in the ninth year of his reign (1302), styles him '*Custos regni nostri.*' The treason of William, his successor, occasioned the downfall of the family. This powerful baron entered into a conspiracy against Robert the Bruce, in which many persons of rank were engaged. The object, according to Barbour, was to elevate Lord Soulis to the Scottish throne. The plot was discovered by the Countess of Strathern.[1] Lord Soulis was seized at Berwick, although he was attended, says Barbour, by three hundred and sixty squires, besides many gallant knights. Having confessed his guilt, in full Parliament, his life was spared by the King; but his domains were forfeited, and he himself confined in the castle of Dumbarton, where he died. Many of his accomplices were executed; among others, the gallant David de Brechin, nephew to the King, whose sole crime was having concealed the treason, in which he disdained

[1] [Sir Thomas Gray (*Scala-chron.* p. 144) states that the conspiracy was revealed by Muryogt de Menteith, afterwards Earl. See Bain's Introduction to *Cal. Documents relating to Scotl.*, vol. iii. (1307-1351), pp. xxvii-xxviii.]

to participate.[1] The Parliament, in which so much noble blood was shed, was long remembered by the name of the *Black Parliament.* It was held in the year 1320.

From this period, the family of Soulis makes no figure in our annals.[2] Local tradition, however, more faithful to the popular sentiment than history, has recorded the character of their chief, and attributed to him many actions which seem to correspond with that character. His portrait is by no means flattering; uniting every quality which could render strength formidable, and cruelty detestable. Combining prodigious bodily strength with cruelty, avarice, dissimulation, and treachery, is it surprising that a people, who attributed every event of life, in a great measure, to the interference of good or evil spirits, should have added to such a character the mystical horrors of sorcery? Thus, he is represented as a cruel tyrant and sorcerer; constantly

[1] As the people thronged to the execution of the gallant youth, they were bitterly rebuked by Sir Ingram de Umfraville, an English or Norman knight, then a favourite follower of Robert Bruce. 'Why press you,' said he, 'to see the dismal catastrophe of so generous a knight? I have seen you throng as eagerly around him to share his bounty, as now to behold his death.' With these words he turned from the scene of blood, and repairing to the King, craved leave to sell his Scottish possessions, and to retire from the country. 'My heart,' said Umfraville, 'will not, for the wealth of the world, permit me to dwell any longer, where I have seen such a knight die by the hands of the executioner.' With the King's leave, he interred the body of David de Brechin, sold his lands, and left Scotland for ever. The story is beautifully told by Barbour, book 19th.

[2] [A stone pillar surmounted by a small urn at the south entrance to the High Kirk, Kilmarnock, commemorated Lord Soulis, slain with an arrow by one of the Boyds of the Kilmarnock family in 1444. In 1825 it was replaced by a fluted pillar surmounted by an urn.]

employed in oppressing his vassals, harassing his neighbours, and fortifying his castle of Hermitage against the King of Scotland; for which purpose he employed all means, human and infernal; invoking the fiends, by his incantations, and forcing his vassals to drag materials, like beasts of burden.[1] Tradition proceeds to relate, that the Scottish King, irritated by reiterated complaints, peevishly exclaimed to the petitioners, 'Boil him, if you please, but let me hear no more of him.' Satisfied with this answer, they proceeded with the utmost haste to execute the commission; which they accomplished by boiling him alive on the Ninestane Rig, in a cauldron, said to have been long preserved at Skelf-hill, a hamlet betwixt Hawick and the Hermitage. Messengers, it is said, were immediately despatched by the King, to prevent the effects of such a hasty declaration; but they only arrived in time to witness the conclusion of the ceremony. The castle of Hermitage, unable to support the load of iniquity, which had been long accumulating within its walls, is supposed to have partly sunk beneath the ground; and its ruins are still regarded by the peasants with peculiar aversion and terror. The door of the chamber, where Lord Soulis is said to have held his con-

[1] [An old tradition in Liddesdale is that he (Lord Soulis) put *bores* in the shoulders of his vassals, the better to yoke them to the sledges, wherewith they dragged forward materials for building the castle. This account of ancient feudal custom, strange to say, is not quite singular. The same occurs in the ballad of 'Young Beichan':—

'In every shoulder they put a *bore*;
In every bore they put a tree;
They made him for to trail the wine
And spices on his fair bodye.'

Note in *Poems and Ballads* by Dr. John Leyden, 1858, p. 217.]

ferences with the evil spirits, is supposed to be opened once in seven years, by that demon, to which, when he left the castle, never to return, he committed the keys, by throwing them over his left shoulder, and desiring it to keep them till his return. Into this chamber, which is really the dungeon of the castle, the peasant is afraid to look; for such is the active malignity of its inmate, that a willow, inserted at the chinks of the door, is found peeled, or stripped of its bark, when drawn back. The Nine-stane Rig, where Lord Soulis was boiled, is a declivity about one mile in breadth, and four in length, descending upon the Water of Hermitage, from the range of hills which separate Liddesdale and Teviotdale. It derives its name from one of those circles of large stones which are termed Druidical, nine of which remained to a late period. Five of these stones are still visible; and two are particularly pointed out, as those which supported the iron bar, upon which the fatal cauldron was suspended.[1]

The formation of ropes of sand, according to popular tradition, was a work of such difficulty, that it was assigned by Michael Scott to a number of spirits, for which it was necessary for him to find some interminable employment. Upon dis-

[1] ['The nine or rather ten stones, within whose circle the pot was said to have been placed, are still standing on the hill, about half a mile southward of Whitrope toll-bar. . . . The height of the largest of these stones does not exceed five feet, and some of the smaller ones are scarcely a foot above the grass. The space which they enclose, about three paces in diameter, appears partially hollowed out, as if there had been formerly a well or spring there. If they are to be considered as a druidical circle, it is certainly one of the smallest in the kingdom.'— *Rambles in Northumberland:* London, 1835, p. 169, quoted in Leyden's *Poems and Ballads*, 1858, p. 218.]

covering the futility of their attempts to accomplish the work assigned, they petitioned their task-master to be allowed to mingle a few handfuls of barley-chaff with the sand. On his refusal, they were forced to leave untwisted the ropes which they had shaped. Such is the traditionary hypothesis of the vermicular ridges of the sand on the shore of the sea.

Redcap is a popular appellation of that class of spirits which haunt old castles. Every ruined tower in the south of Scotland is supposed to have an inhabitant of this species.

[Leyden has included in his ballad several stanzas from an old ballad, 'John Tamson and the Friar,' published in his glossary to *The Complaynte of Scotland.*]

LORD SOULIS

I

Lord Soulis he sat in Hermitage Castle,
And beside him Old Redcap sly;—
'Now, tell me, thou sprite, who art meikle of might,
The death that I must die?'

II

'While thou shalt bear a charm'd life,
And hold that life of me,
'Gainst lance and arrow, sword and knife,
I shall thy warrant be.

III

'Nor forgèd steel, nor hempen band,
Shall e'er thy limbs confine,
Till threefold ropes of sifted sand,
Around thy body twine.

IV

'If danger press fast, knock thrice on the chest,
With rusty padlocks bound;

Turn away your eyes, when the lid shall rise,
And listen to the sound.'

V

Lord Soulis he sat in Hermitage Castle,
And Redcap was not by;
And he call'd on a page, who was witty and sage,
To go to the barmkin high.

VI

'And look thou east, and look thou west,
And quickly come tell to me,
What troopers haste along the waste,
And what may their livery be.'

VII

He look'd o'er fell, and he look'd o'er flat,
But nothing, I wist, he saw,
Save a pyot on a turret that sat
Beside a corby craw.

VIII

The page he look'd at the skrieh[1] of day,
But nothing, I wist, he saw,
Till a horseman gray, in the royal array,
Rode down the Hazel-shaw.

[1] *Skrieh*, peep.

IX

'Say, why do you cross o'er moor and moss?'
So loudly cried the page;
'I tidings bring, from Scotland's King,
To Soulis of Hermitage.

X

'He bids me tell that bloody warden,
Oppressor of low and high,
If ever again his lieges complain,
The cruel Soulis shall die.'

XI

By traitorous sleight they seized the knight,
Before he rode or ran,
And through the keystone of the vault,
They plunged him, horse and man.

* * * * *

XII

O May she came, and May she gaed,
By Goranberry green;
And May she was the fairest maid,
That ever yet was seen.

XIII

O May she came, and May she gaed,
By Goranberry tower;
And who was it but cruel Lord Soulis,
That carried her from her bower?

XIV

He brought her to his castle gray,
By Hermitage's side;
Says—'Be content, my lovely May,
For thou shalt be my bride.'

XV

With her yellow hair, that glitter'd fair,
She dried the trickling tear;
She sighed the name of Branxholm's heir,
The youth that loved her dear.

XVI

'Now, be content, my bonny May,
And take it for your hame;
Or ever and aye shall ye rue the day,
You heard young Branxholm's name.

XVII

'O'er Branxholm tower, ere the morning hour,
When the lift[1] is like lead sae blue,
The smoke shall roll white on the weary night,
And the flame shine dimly through.'

XVIII

Syne he 's ca'd on him Ringan Red,
A sturdy kemp was he;
From friend or foe, in Border feid,
Who never a foot would flee.

[1] *Lift*, sky.

XIX

Red Ringan sped, and the spearmen led,
Up Goranberry slack;
Ay, many a wight, unmatch'd in fight,
Who never more came back.

XX

And bloody set the westering sun,
And bloody rose he up;
But little thought young Branxholm's heir,
Where he that night should sup.

XXI

He shot the roebuck on the lee,
The dun-deer on the law;
The glamour[1] sure was in his ee
When Ringan nigh did draw.

XXII

O'er heathy edge, through rustling sedge,
He sped till day was set;
And he thought it was his merry-men true,
When he the spearmen met.

XXIII

Far from relief, they seized the chief;
His men were far away;

[1] *Glamour*, magical delusion.

Through Hermitage slack, they sent him back,
To Soulis' castle gray;
Syne onward fure[1] for Branxholm tower,
Where all his merry-men lay.

XXIV

'Now, welcome, noble Branxholm's heir!
Thrice welcome,' quoth Soulis to me!
'Say, dost thou repair to my castle fair,
My wedding guest to be?
And lovely May deserves, per fay,
A brideman such as thee!'

XXV

And broad and bloody rose the sun,
And on the barmkin shone;
When the page was aware of Red Ringan there,
Who came riding all alone.

XXVI

To the gate of the tower Lord Soulis he speeds
As he lighted on the wall,
Says—'Where did ye stable my stalwart steeds,
And where do they tarry all?'

XXVII

'We stabled them sure, on the Tarras Muir.
We stabled them sure,' quoth he:
'Before we could cross the quaking moss,
They all were lost but me.'

[1] [*Fure*, fared.]

XXVIII

He clench'd his fist, and he knock'd on the chest,
And he heard a stifled groan;
And at the third knock, each rusty lock
Did open one by one.

XXIX

He turn'd away his eyes, as the lid did rise,
And he listen'd silentlie;
And he heard breathed slow, in murmurs low,
'Beware of a coming tree!'

XXX

In muttering sound the rest was drown'd;
No other word heard he;
But slow as it rose, the lid did close,
With the rusty padlocks three.

* * * * *

XXXI

Now rose with Branxholm's ae brother,
The Teviot, high and low;
Bauld Walter by name, of meikle fame,
For none could bend his bow.

XXXII

O'er glen and glade, to Soulis there sped
The fame of his array,
And that Teviotdale would soon assail
His towers and castle gray.

XXXIII

With clenchèd fist, he knock'd on the chest,
And again he heard a groan;
And he raised his eyes as the lid did rise,
But answer heard he none.

XXXIV

The charm was broke, when the spirit spoke,
And it murmur'd sullenlie—
'Shut fast the door, and for evermore,
Commit to me the key.

XXXV

'Alas! that ever thou raised'st thine eyes,
Thine eyes to look on me!
Till seven years are o'er, return no more,
For here thou must not be.'

XXXVI

Think not but Soulis was wae to yield
His warlock chamber o'er;
He took the keys from the rusty lock,
That never were ta'en before.

XXXVII

He threw them o'er his left shoulder,
With meikle care and pain;
And he bade it keep them fathoms deep,
Till he return'd again.

XXXVIII

And still, when seven years are o'er,
Is heard the jarring sound;
When slowly opes the charm'd door
Of the chamber under ground.

XXXIX

And some within the chamber door
Have cast a curious eye;
But none dare tell, for the spirits in hell,
The fearful sights they spy.

* * * * *

XL

When Soulis thought on his merry-men now,
A woeful wight was he;
Says—'Vengeance is mine, and I will not repine!
But Branxholm's heir shall die!'

XLI[1]

Says—'What would you do, young Branxholm,
Gin ye had me, as I have thee?'
'I would take you to the good greenwood,
And gar your ain hand wale[2] the tree.'

XLII

'Now shall thine ain hand wale the tree,
For all thy mirth and meikle pride;

[1] [This stanza is almost verbally from 'John Tamson.']
[2] *Wale*, choose.

And May shall choose, if my love she refuse,
A scrog bush thee beside.'

XLIII

They carried him to the good greenwood,
Where the green pines grew in a row;
And they heard the cry, from the branches high,
Of the hungry carrion crow.

XLIV

They carried him on from tree to tree,
The spiry boughs below;
'Say, shall it be thine, on the tapering pine,
To feed the hooded crow?'

XLV

'The fir-tops fall by Branxholm wall,
When the night-blast stirs the tree,
And it shall not be mine to die on the pine,
I loved in infancie.'

XLVI

Young Branxholm turn'd him, and oft look'd back,
And aye he pass'd from tree to tree;
Young Branxholm peep'd, and puirly[1] spake,
'O sic a death is no for me!'

[1] *Puirly*, softly.

XLVII

And next they pass'd the aspen gray,
Its leaves were rustling mournfullie:
'Now, choose thee, choose thee, Branxholm gay!
Say, wilt thou never choose the tree?'

XLVIII

'More dear to me is the aspen gray,
More dear than any other tree;
For beneath the shade, that its branches made,
Have pass'd the vows of my love and me.'

XLIX

Young Branxholm peep'd, and puirly spake,
Until he did his ain men see,
With witches' hazel in each steel cap,
In scorn of Soulis' gramarye;
Then shoulder-height for glee he lap,
'Methinks I spye a coming tree!'

L

'Ay, many may come, but few return,'
Quo' Soulis, the lord of gramarye;
'No warrior's hand in fair Scotland
Shall ever dint a wound on me!'

LI

'Now, by my sooth,' quo' bauld Walter,
'If that be true we soon shall see.'

His bent bow he drew, and the arrow was true,
But never a wound or scar had he.

LII

Then up bespake him true Thomas,
He was the Lord of Ersyltoun:
'The wizard's spell no steel can quell,
Till once your lances bear him down.'

LIII

They bore him down with lances bright,
But never a wound or scar had he;
With hempen bands they bound him tight,
Both hands and feet on the Nine-stane lee.

LIV

That wizard accurst, the bands he burst;
They moulder'd at his magic spell;
And neck and heel, in the forgèd steel,
They bound him against the charms of hell.

LV

That wizard accurst, the bands he burst;
No forgèd steel his charms could bide;
Then up bespake him true Thomas,
'We'll bind him yet, whate'er betide.'

LVI

The black spae-book from his breast he took,
Impress'd with many a warlock spell:

And the book it was wrote by Michael Scott,
Who held in awe the fiends of hell.

LVII

They buried it deep, where his bones they sleep,
That mortal man might never it see:
But Thomas did save it from the grave,
When he return'd from Faërie.

LVIII

The black spae-book from his breast he took,
And turn'd the leaves with curious hand;
No ropes, did he find, the wizard could bind,
But threefold ropes of sifted sand.

LIX

They sifted the sand from the Nine-stane burn,
And shaped the ropes so curiouslie;
But the ropes would neither twist nor twine,
For Thomas true and his gramarye.

LX

The black spae-book from his breast he took,
And again he turn'd it with his hand;
And he bade each lad of Teviot add
The barley chaff to the sifted sand.

LXI

The barley chaff to the sifted sand
They added still by handfuls nine;

But Redcap sly unseen was by,
And the ropes would neither twist nor twine.

LXII

And still beside the Nine-stane burn,
Ribb'd like the sand at mark of sea,
The ropes, that would not twist nor turn,
Shaped of the sifted sand you see.

LXIII

The black spae-book true Thomas he took,
Again its magic leaves he spread;
And he found that to quell the powerful spell,
The wizard must be boil'd in lead.

LXIV

On a circle of stones they placed the pot,
On a circle of stones but barely nine;
They heated it red and fiery hot,
Till the burnish'd brass did glimmer and shine.

LXV

They roll'd him up in a sheet of lead,
A sheet of lead for a funeral pall;
They plunged him in the cauldron red,
And melted him, lead, and bones, and all.

LXVI

At the Skelf-hill, the cauldron still
The men of Liddesdale can show ;
And on the spot, where they boil'd the pot,
The spreat[1] and the deer-hair[2] ne'er shall grow.

[1] *Spreat*—The spreat is a species of water-rush.
[2] *Deer-hair*—The deer-hair is a coarse species of pointed grass, which, in May, bears a very minute, but beautiful yellow flower.

NOTES

ON

LORD SOULIS

Hermitage Castle.—St. i. l. 1.

[Hermitage Castle was founded some time before 1244, its erection being mentioned as one of the reasons of the invasion of Scotland by Henry III. in that year. It was originally a massive square tower, smaller towers at each corner being later additions. After the forfeiture of the Soulises in 1320, Liddesdale and the castle of Hermitage were conferred by Robert the Bruce on Sir John Graham of Abercorn; after whose death they passed to Sir William Douglas, the 'Knight of Liddesdale,' who had married Graham's sole daughter and heiress. When Archibald Douglas, fifth Earl of Angus, resigned Liddesdale and Hermitage into the hands of the King in 1492 (see vol. i. p. 63), they were conferred on Patrick Hepburn, first Earl of Bothwell. It was to visit the fourth Earl at Hermitage Castle that Queen Mary, in October 1566, undertook her romantic ride from Jedburgh. After the forfeiture of Francis, fifth Earl of Bothwell, in 1594, Liddesdale, including the Hermitage, passed to the Scotts of Buccleuch.]

The death that I must die?—St. i. l. 4.

The tradition regarding the death of Lord Soulis, however singular, is not without a parallel in the real history of Scotland. The same extraordinary mode of cookery was actually practised (*horresco referens*) upon

the body of a sheriff of the Mearns. This person, whose name was Melville of Glenbervie, bore his faculties so harshly, that he became detested by the barons of the country. Reiterated complaints of his conduct having been made to James I. (or, as others say, to the Duke of Albany), the monarch answered, in a moment of unguarded impatience, 'Sorrow gin the sheriff were sodden, and supped in broo!' The complainers retired, perfectly satisfied. Shortly after, the Lairds of Arbuthnot, Mather, Laureston, and Pittaraw, decoyed Melville to the top of the hill of Garvock, above Lawrencekirk, under pretence of a grand hunting party. Upon this place (still called the *Sheriff's Pot*), the barons had prepared a fire and a boiling cauldron, into which they plunged the unlucky sheriff. After he was *sodden* (as the King termed it) for a sufficient time, the savages, that they might literally observe the royal mandate, concluded the scene of abomination by actually partaking of the hell-broth.

The three lairds were outlawed for this offence; and Barclay, one of their number, to screen himself from justice, erected the kaim (*i.e.* the camp, or fortress) of Mathers, which stands upon a rocky and inaccessible peninsula, overhanging the German Ocean. The Laird of Arbuthnot is said to have eluded the royal vengeance, by claiming the benefit of the law of clan Macduff, concerning which the curious reader will find some particulars subjoined. A pardon, or perhaps a deed of replegiation, founded upon that law, is said to be still extant among the records of the Viscount of Arbuthnot.

Pellow narrates a similar instance of atrocity, perpetrated after the death of Muley Ismael, Emperor of Morocco, in 1727, when the inhabitants of Old Fez, throwing off all allegiance to his successor, slew 'Alchyde Boel le Rosea, their old governor, boiling his flesh, and many, through spite, eating thereof, and throwing what they could not eat of it to the dogs.'—See Pellow's *Travels in South Barbary*. And we may add, to such tales, the Oriental tyranny of Zenghis Khan, who

immersed seventy Tartar Khans in as many boiling cauldrons.

The punishment of boiling seems to have been in use among the English at a very late period, as appears from the following passage in Stowe's *Chronicle*:—'The 17th March (1524), Margaret Davy, a maid, was boiled at Smithfield, for poisoning of three households that she had dwelled in.' But unquestionably the usual practice of Smithfield cookery, about that period, was by a different application of fire.

LAW OF CLAN MACDUFF

Though it is rather foreign to the proper subject of this work, many readers may not be displeased to have some account of the curious privilege enjoyed by the descendants of the famous Macduff, Thane of Fife, and thence called the Law of the Clan, or family, bearing his name.

When the revolution was accomplished, in which Macbeth was dethroned and slain, Malcolm, sensible of the high services of the Thane of Fife, is said, by our historians, to have promised to grant the first three requests he should make. Macduff accordingly demanded, and obtained, first, that he and his successors, Lords of Fife, should place the crown on the King's head at his coronation; secondly, that they should lead the vanguard of the army, whenever the royal banner was displayed; and, lastly, this privilege of clan Macduff, whereby any person, being related to Macduff within the ninth degree, and having committed homicide in *chaude melle* (without premeditation), should, upon flying to Macduff's Cross, and paying a certain fine, obtain remission of their guilt. Such, at least, is the account given of the law by all our historians.[1] Nevertheless,

[1] [Wyntoun is the authority of the story; but the personality of Macduff is probably in great part mythical.]

there seems ground to suspect that the privilege did not amount to an actual and total remission of the crime, but only to a right of being exempted from all other courts of jurisdiction, except that of the Lord of Fife. The reader is presented with an old document, in which the law of clan Macduff is pleaded on behalf of one of the ancestors of Moray of Abercairney; and it is remarkable that he does not claim any immunity, but solely a right of being repledged, because his cause had already been tried by Robert Earl of Fife, the sole competent judge. But the privilege of being answerable only to the chief of their own clan was, to the descendants of Macduff, almost equivalent to an absolute indemnity.

Macduff's Cross was situated near Lindores, on the march dividing Fife from Strathern. The form of this venerable monument unfortunately offended the zeal of the reformer, Knox, and it was totally demolished by his followers. The pedestal, a solid block of stone, alone escaped the besom of destruction. It bore an inscription, which, according to the apocryphal account of Sir Robert Sibbald, was a mixture of Latin, Saxon, Danish, and old French. Skene has preserved two lines:—

> 'Propter Makgridim et hoc oblatum,
> Accipe Smeleridem super lampade limpidæ labrum.'
> *Skene*, de *verb. sig. voce Clan Macduff.*

The full inscription, real or pretended, may be found in Sir Robert Sibbald's *History of Fife*, and James Cunninghame's *Essay upon Macduff's Cross*, together with what is called a translation, or rather paraphrase, of the piebald jargon which composes it. In Gough's edition of Camden's *Britannia*, a different and more intelligible version is given, on the authority of a Mr. Douglas of Newburgh.[1] The cross was dedicated to a

[1] [Antiquaries have not yet been able to solve the riddle of the inscription. See especially Alex. Laing's *Lindores Abbey and Newburgh*, 1876.]

St. Macgider. Around the pedestal are tumuli, said to be the graves of those who, having claimed the privilege of the law, failed in proving their consanguinity to the Thane of Fife. Such persons were instantly executed. The people of Newburgh believe, that the spectres of these criminals still haunt the ruined cross, and claim that mercy for their souls which they had failed to obtain for their mortal existence.

The late Lord Hailes gives it as his opinion, that the indulgence was only to last till the tenth generation from Macduff.

Fordun and Wintoun state, that the fine, to be paid by the person taking sanctuary, was twenty-four merks for a gentleman, and twelve merks for a yeoman. Skene affirms it to be nine cows, and a colpindach (*i.e.* a quey, or cow, of one or two years old).—Fordun, lib. v. cap. 9; Wintoun's *Cronykel*, b. vi. ch. 19: Skene, *ut supra*. The last cited author avers, that he has seen an old evident, bearing, that Spens of Wormestoun, being of Macduff's kin, enjoyed this privilege for the slaughter of one Kinnermonth. The following deed, of a like nature, is published from a copy, accurately transcribed from an original deed, in the hands of the late Mr. Cuming, of the Herald Office, Edinburgh, by Messrs. Brown and Gibb, librarians to the Faculty of Advocates. The blanks are occasioned by some parts of the deed having been obliterated.

'In nomine domini amen. Per presens publicum instrumentum cunctis pateat evidenter quod anno ejusdem domini mo. cco. nonagesimo primo, indictione quinta decima Pontificatus sanctissimi in Christo Patris, ac domini nostri Clementis divina providentia Papæ septimi anno quarto decimo mensis Decembris die septimo. In mei notarii publici et testium subscriptorum presentia personaliter constitutus nobilis et potens vir dominus Alexander de Moravia, miles, cum prolocutoribus suis, domino Bernardo de Howden, milite, et Johanne de Logie, vocatus par rotulos indictamentorum super interfectione Willielmi de Spalden coram Jus-

ticiariis; viz. Johanne de Drummond milite, Mauricio de Drummond.

'Filium Willielmi in judicio sedentibus apud Foulis et potestatus erat, quod ex quo semel pro interfectione dicti hominis antea fuit per indictamentum
judicio vocatus et replegiatus ad legem de clan Macduff, per dominum Robertum comitem de Fyfe non tenebatur coram quocunque alio de dicta interfectione
judiciari, quousque dicta lex de clan Macduff suo intemerata privilegio de ipso ut prædicitur ad ipsam legem atto. Petens ipsum legaliter deliberari, et per ipsos vel eorum indictamentis sic indebite ulterius non vexari. Quiquidem judicis nolle dictum dominum Alexandrum deliberarie si ipsum bene vellent respectuare eousque quod dominus de Brochepen justiciarius capitalis dicta actione ordinaverunt quod sibi et suo concilio expedientius videretur, quiquidem dominus Alexander et sui prolocutores eorum petitione et prestatione et predictorum judicum responsione, petierunt a me notario publico infra scripto præsentium acta fuerunt hæc apud Foulis, in itinere justiciario ibidem tento anno mense die et pontificatu prescriptis per nobilibus et discretis viris dominis Mauricio archidiacono Dumblan, Willielmo de Grame, Vinfrido de Cunyngham, David de
Militibus, Moritio de Drummond, Waltero de Drummond, Walter de Moravia, Scutiferis, testibus ad præmissa vocatis specialiter et rogatis.

'Et ego Johannes Symonis Clericus Dunkeldensis publicus imperial. notarius prædicti domini Alexandri comparatione ipsius petitione et protestatione desuper justiciariorum responsione omnibusque aliis et singulis dum sic ut priusquam et agerentur una cum prenominatis testibus presens interfui eaque sic fieri vidi et in hanc formam publicam redegi, manuque mea propria scripsi requisitus et roga
om omnium premissorum signo meo consueto signavi.'—[W. S.]

By Goranberry tower.—St. xiii. l. 2.

[The old tower or peel-house of Goranberry was situated on Hermitage Water, about two miles above Hermitage Castle. It originally belonged to a branch of the Elliots, and, according to popular belief, was haunted by a supernatural of the Brownie class, known by the name of *The Cowie.*]

Alas! that ever thou raised'st thine eyes,
Thine eyes to look on me!—St. xxxv. ll. 1-2.

The idea of Lord Soulis' familiar seems to be derived from the curious story of the spirit Orthone and the Lord of Corasse, which, I think, the reader will be pleased to see in all its Gothic simplicity, as translated from Froissart, by the Lord of Berners.

'It is great marveyle to consyder one thynge, the whiche was shewed to me in the Earl of Foix house at Ortayse, of hym that enfourmed me of the busynesse at Juberothe (Aljubarota, where the Spaniards, with their French allies, were defeated by the Portugueze, A.D. 1385). He shewed me one thyng that I have oftentymes thought on sithe, and shall do as longe as I live. As thys squyer told me that of trouthe the next day after the battayl was thus fought, at Juberoth, the Erle of Foiz knewe it, whereof I had gret marveyle; for the said Sonday, Monday, and Tuesday, the erle was very pensyf, and so sadde of chere, that no man could have a worde of hym. And all the said three days he wold nat issue out of his chambre, nor speke to any man, though they were never so nere about hym. And, on the Tuesday night, he called to him his brother Arnault Guyllyam, and sayd to hym, with a soft voice, "Our men hath had to do, whereof I am sorrie; for it is come of them, by their voyage, as I sayd or they departed." Arnault Guyllyam, who was a sage knight, and knewe right well his brother's condicions (*i.e.* temper), stode still, and gave none answere. And than the erle, who thought to declare his mind more plainlye, for long he

had borne the trouble thereof in his herte, spake agayn more higher than he dyd before, and sayd, "By God, Sir Arnault, it is as I saye, and shortely ye shall here tidynges thereof; but the countrey of Byerne, this hundred yere, never lost suche a losse at no journey, as they have done now in Portugal."—Dyvers knyghtes and squyers, that were there present, and herde hym say so, stode styll, and durst nat speke, but they remembered his wordes. And within a ten days after, they knewe the trouthe thereof, by such as had been at the busynesse, and there they shewed every thinge as it was fortuned at Juberoth. Than the erle renewed agayn his dolour, and all the countreye were in sorrowe, for they had lost their parentes, brethren, chyldren, and frendes. "Saint Mary!" quod I to the squyer that shewed me thys tale, "how is it, that the Earl of Foiz could know, on one daye, what was done, within a day or two before, beyng so farre off?"—"By my faythe, sir," quod he, "as it appeared well, he knewe it."—"Than he is a diviner," quod I, "or els he hath messangers, that flyethe with the wynde, or he must needs have some craft." The squyer began to laugh, and sayd, "Surely he must know it by some art of negromansye or otherwyse. To saye the trouthe, we cannot tell how it is, but by our ymaginacions."—"Sir," quod I, "suche ymaginacions as ye have therein, if it please you to shew me, I wolde be gladde thereof; and if it be suche a thynge as ought to be secrete, I shall nat publysshe it, nor as long as I am in thys countrey I shall never speke worde thereof."—"I praye you thereof," quod the squyer, "for I wolde nat it shulde be knowen, that I shulde speke thereof. But I shall shewe you, as dyvers men speketh secretelye, whan they be togyder as frendes." Than he drew me aparte into a corner of the chappell at Ortayse, and then began his tale, and sayd:

'It is well a twenty yeares paste, that there was, in this countre, a barone, called Raymond, Lorde of Corasse, whyche is a sevyn leagues from this towne of

Ortayse. Thys Lord of Corasse had that same tyme, a plee at Avygnon before the Pope, for the dysmes (*i.e.* tithes) of his churche, against a clerk, curate there; the whiche priest was of Catelogne. He was a grete clerk, and claymed to have ryghte of the dysmes, in the towne of Corasse, which was valued to an hundred florens by the yere, and the ryghte that he had, he shewed and proved it; and, by sentence diffynitive, Pope Urbane the Fyfthe, in consistory generall, condempned the knighte, and gave judgement wyth the preest, and of this last judgement he had letters of the Pope, for his possession, and so rode tyll he came into Berne, and there shewed his letters and bulles of the Popes for his possession of his dysmes. The Lord of Corasse had gret indignacion at this preest, and came to hym, and said, "Maister Pers, or Maister Martin (as his name was), thinkest thou, that by reason of thy letters I will lose mine herytage—be not so hardy, that thou take any thynge that is myne; if thou do, it shall cost the thy life. Go thy waye into some other place to get the a benefyce, for of myne herytage thou gettest no parte, and ones for alwayes, I defy thee." The clerk douted the knight, for he was a cruell man, therefore he durst nat parceyver.—Then he thoughte to return to Avygnon, as he dyde; but, whan he departed, he came to the knight, the Lord of Corasse, and sayd, "Sir, by force, and nat by ryght, ye take away from me the ryght of my churche, wherein you greatly hurt your conscience. I am not so strong in this countrey as ye be; but, sir, knowe, for trouthe, that as soon as I maye, I shall sende to you suche a champyon, whom ye shall doubte more than me." The knight, who doubted nothyng his thretynges, said, "God be with the; do what thou mayst; I doute no more dethe than lyfe; for all thy wordes, I will not lese mine herytage." Thus, the clerk departed from the Lord of Corasse, and went I cannot tell wheder into Avygnon or into Catalogne, and forgat nat the promise that he had made to the Lord of Corasse or he departed. For whan the knight thoughte leest on hym, about a three monethes

after, as the knyght laye on a nyght a-bedde in his castelle of Corasse, with the lady, there came to hym messangers invisible, and made a marvellous tempest and noise in the castell, that it seemed as thoughe the castell shulde have fallen downe, and strak gret strokes at his chambre dore, that the goode ladye, his wife, was soore afrayde. The knyght herd alle, but he spoke no word thereof; bycause he wolde shewe no abasshed corage, for he was hardy to abyde all adventures. Thys noyse and tempest was in sundry places of the castell, and dured a long space, and at length, cessed for that nyght. Than the nexte mornynge, all the servants of the house came to the lord, whan he was risen, and sayd, "Sir, have you nat herde this night that we have done?" The lord dissembled, and sayd, "No! I herd nothyng—what have you herde?" Than they shewed him what noyse they hadde herde, and howe alle the vessel in the kechyn was overtowrned. Than the lord began to laugh, and sayd, "Yea, sirs! ye dremed; it was nothynge but the wynde."—"In the name of God!" quod the ladye, "I herde it well." The next nyght there was as great noyse and greatter, and suche strokes gyven at his chambre dore and windows, as alle shulde have broken in pieces. The knyght starte up out of his bedde, and wolde not lette, to demaunde who was at his chambre dore that tyme of the nyght; and anone he was answered by a voyce that sayd, "I am here." Quod the knyght, "Who sent the hyder?"—"The clerk of Catelogne sent me hyder," quod the voice, "to whom thou dost gret wronge, for thou hast taken from hym the ryghtes of his benefyce; I will nat leave the in rest tylle thou haste made hym a good accompte, so that he be pleased." Quod the knyght, "What is thy name, that thou art so good a messangere!" Quod he, "I am called Orthone." —"Orthone!" quod the knyght, "the servyce of a clerke is lytell profyte for the. He will putte the to moche payne if thou beleve hym. I pray the leave hym, and come and serve me; and I shall give the goode thanke." Orthone was redy to aunswere, for he was inamours with

the knyght, and sayde, "Woldest thou fayne have my servyce?"—"Yea, truly," quod the knyght, "so thou do no hurte to any persone in this house."—"No more I will do," quod Orthone, "for I have no power to do any other yvell, but to awake the out of thy slepe, or some other."—"Well," quod the knyght, "do as I tell the, and we shall soone agree, and leave the yvill clerke, for there is no good thyng in him, but to put the to payne; therefore, come and serve me."—"Well," quod Orthone, "and sythe thou wilt have me, we are agreed."

'So this spyrite Orthone loved so the knyght, that oftentymes he wolde come and vysyte him, while he laye in his bedde aslepe, and outher pull him by the eare, or els stryke at his chambre dore or windowe. And, whan the knyght awoke, than he wolde saye, "Orthone, lat me slepe."—"Nay," quod Orthone, "that I will nat do, tyll I have shewed the such tydinges as are fallen a-late." The ladye, the knyghtes wyfe, wolde be sore afrayed, that her heer wald stand up, and hyde herself under the clothes. Than the knyght wolde saye, "Why, what tidynges has thou brought me?"—Quod Orthone, "I am come out of England, or out of Hungry, or some other place, and yesterday I came hens, and such things are fallen, or such other." So thus the Lord of Corasse knewe, by Orthone, every thing that was done in any part of the worlde. And in this case he contynued a fyve yere, and could not kepe his own counsayle, but at last discovered it to the Earl of Foiz. I shall shewe you howe.

'The firste yere, the Lord of Corasse came on a day to Ortayse, to the Erle of Foiz, and sayd to him, "Sir, such things are done in England, or in Scotland, or in Almange, or in any other countrey." And ever the Erle of Foiz found his sayeing true, and had great marveyle how he shulde knowe such things so shortly. And, on a tyme, the Erle of Foiz examined him so straitly, that the Lord of Corasse shewed hym alle toguyder howe he knewe it, and howe he came to hym firste. When the Erle of Foiz hard that, he was joyfull, and said, "Sir of

Corasse, kepe him well in your love; I wolde I hadd suche an messanger; he costeth you nothyng, and ye knowe by him every thynge that is done in the worlde." The knyght answered, and sayd, "Sir, that is true." Thus, the Lord of Corasse was served with Orthone a long season. I can nat saye if this Orthone hadde any more masters or nat; but every weke, twise or thrise, he wolde come and vysite the Lord of Corasse, and wolde shewe hym such tidyngs of any thing that was fallen fro whens he came. And ever the Lord of Corasse, when he knewe any thynge, he wrote thereof to the Erle of Foiz, who had great joy thereof; for he was the lord, of all the worlde, that most desyred to here news out of straunge places. And, on a tyme, the Lord of Corasse was wyth the Erle of Foiz, and the erle demaunded of hym, and sayd, "Sir of Corasse, dyd ye ever as yet se your messengere?"—"Nay, surely, sir," quod the knyght, "nor I never desyred it."—"That is marveyle," quod the erle; "if I were as well acquainted with him as ye be, I wolde have desyred to have sene hym; wherefore, I pray you, desyre it of hym, and then telle me what form and facyon he is of. I have herd you say howe he speketh as good Gascon as outher you or I."—"Truely, sir," quod the knyght, "so it is: he speketh as well, and as fayr, as any of us both do. And surely, sir, sithe ye counsayle me, I shall do my payne to see him as I can." And so, on a night, as he lay in his bedde, with the ladye his wife, who was so inured to here Orthone, that she was no longer afrayd of him; than cam Orthone, and pulled the lord by the eare, who was fast asleep, and therewith he awoke, and asked who was there? "I am here," quod Orthone. Then he demaunded, "From whens comest thou nowe?"—"I come," quod Orthone, "from Prague, in Boesme."—"How farre is that hens?" quod the knyght. "A threescore days journey," quod Orthone. "And art thou come hens so soon?" quod the knyght. "Yea, truely," quod Orthone, "I come as fast as the wynde, or faster."—"Hast thou than winges?" quod the knyght. "Nay, truely," quod he. "How

canst thou than flye so fast?" quod the knyght. "Ye have nothing to do to knowe that," quod Orthone. "No?" quod the knyght, "I wolde gladly se the, to know what forme thou art of."—"Well," quod Orthone, "ye have nothing to do to knowe: it sufficeth you to here me, and to shewe you tidynges."—"In faythe," quod the knyght, "I wolde love the moche better an I myght se the ones."—"Well," quod Orthone, "sir, sithe you have so gret desyre to se me, the first thynge that ye se to-morrowe, whan ye ryse out of your bedde, the same shall be I."—"That is sufficient," quod the lorde. "Go thy way; I gyve the leave to departe for this nyght." And the next mornynge the lord rose, and the ladye his wyfe was so afrayd, that she durst not ryse, but fayned herself sicke, and sayd she wolde not ryse. Her husband wolde have had her to have rysen. "Sir," quod she, "than shall I se Orthone, and I wolde not se him by my gode wille."—"Well," quod the knyght, "I wolde gladly se hym." And so he arose, fayre and easily, out of his bedde, and sat down on his bedde-syde, wenying to have sene Orthone in his owne proper form; but he sawe nothynge wherbye he myghte saye, "Lo, yonder is Orthone." So that day past, and the next night came, and when the knyght was in his bedde, Orthone came, and began to speke, as he was accustomed. "Go thy waye," quod the knyght, "thou arte but a lyer; thou promysest that I shuld have sene the, and it was not so."—"No?" quod he, "and I shewed myself to the."—"That is not so," quod the lord. "Why," quod Orthone, "whan ye rose out of your bedde, sawe ye nothynge?" Than the lorde studyed a lytell, and advysed himself well. "Yes, truely," quod the knyght, "now I remember me, as I sate on my bedde-syde, thynking on the, I sawe two strawes upon the pavement, tumblynge one upon another."—"That same was I," quod Orthone, "into that fourme I dyd putte myself as than."—"That is not enough to me," quod the lord; "I pray the putte thyselfe into some other fourme, that I may better se and

knowe the."—"Well," quod Orthone, "ye will do so muche, that ye will lose me, and I to go fro you, for ye desyre to moch of me."—"Nay," quod the knyght, "thou shalt not go fro me; let me se the ones, and I will desyre no more."—"Well," quod Orthone, "ye shall se me to-morrowe; take hede, the first thyng that ye se after ye be out of your chambre, it shall be I."—"Well," quod the knyght, "I am than content. Go thy way, lette me slepe." And so Orthone departed, and the next mornyng the lord arose, and yssued oute of his chambre, and wente to a windowe, and looked downe into the courte of the castell, and cast about his eyen. And the firste thyng he sawe was a sowe, the greattest that ever he sawe; and she seemed to be so leane and yvell-favoured, that there was nothyng on her but the skynne and the bones, with long eares, and a long leane snout. The Lord of Corasse had marveyle of that leane sowe, and was wery of the sighte of her, and comaunded his men to fetch his houndes, and sayd, "Let the dogges hunt her to dethe, and devour her." His servaunts opened the kenells, and lette oute his houndes, and dyd sette them on this sowe. And, at the last, the sowe made a great crye, and looked up to the Lord of Corasse as he looked out at a windowe, and so sodaynely vanyshed awaye, no man wyste howe. Than the Lord of Corasse entred into his chambre, right pensyve, and than he remembered hym of Orthone, his messangere, and sayd, "I repent me that I set my houndes on him. It is an adventure, an I here any more of hym; for he sayed to me oftentymes, that if I displeased hym, I shulde lose hym." The lord sayd trouthe, for never after he came into the castell of Corasse, and also the knyght dyed the same yere next followinge.

"So, sir," said the squyer, "thus have I shewed you the lyfe of Orthone, and howe, for a season, he served the Lord of Corasse with newe tidynges."—"It is true, sir," sayd I, "but nowe, as to your firste purpose. Is the Earl of Foiz served with suche an messengere?"—"Surely," quod the squyer, "it is the ymaginacion of

many, that he hath such messengers, for ther is nothynge done in any place, but and he sette his mynde thereto, he will knowe it, and whan men thynke leest thereof. And so dyd he, when the goode knyghtes and squyers of this country were slayne in Portugale at Guberothe. Some saythe, the knowledge of such thynges hath done hym moche profyte, for and there be but the value of a spone lost in his house, anone he will know where it is." So thus, then I toke leave of the squyer, and went to other company ; but I bare well away his tale.'—BOURCHIER'S *Translation* of FROISSART'S *Chronycle*, vol. ii. chap. 37.

He took the keys from the rusty lock,
That never were ta'en before.

He threw them o'er his left shoulder,
With meikle care and pain ;
And he bade it keep them fathoms deep,
Till he return'd again.—St. xxxvi.-xxxvii.

The circumstance of Lord Soulis having thrown the key over his left shoulder, and bid the fiend keep it till his return, is noted in the introduction, as a part of his traditionary history. In the course of this autumn (1806), the Earl of Dalkeith being encamped near the Hermitage Castle, for the amusement of shooting, directed some workmen to clear away the rubbish from the door of the dungeon, in order to ascertain its ancient dimensions and architecture. To the great astonishment of the labourers, and of the country-people who were watching their proceedings, a rusty iron key, of considerable size, was found among the ruins, a little way from the dungeon door. The well-known tradition instantly passed from one to another; and it was generally agreed, that the malevolent demon, who had so long retained possession of the key of the castle, now found himself obliged to resign it to the heir-apparent of the domain. In the course of their researches, a large iron ladle, somewhat resembling that used by plumbers, was also discovered; and both the reliques are now in Lord Dalkeith's possession.

In the summer of 1805, another discovery was made in the haunted ruins of Hermitage. In a recess of the wall of the castle, intended apparently for receiving the end of a beam or joist, a boy, seeking for birds' nests, found a very curious antique silver ring, embossed with hearts, the well-known cognisance of the Douglas family, placed interchangeably with quatre-foils all round the circle. The workmanship has an uncommonly rude and ancient appearance, and warrants our believing that it may have belonged to one of the Earls of Angus, who carried the heart and quatre-foils [1] in their arms. They parted with the castle and lordship of Liddesdale, in exchange for that of Bothwell, in the beginning of the sixteenth century. This ring is now in the Editor's possession, by the obliging gift of Mr. John Ballantyne, of the house of Ballantyne and Company, so distinguished for typography. 1806. [W. S.]

The fearful sights they spy.—St. xxxix. l. 4.

['It may not be altogether out of place to say that, along with other Border keeps, Hermitage Castle is understood to have been dismantled shortly after the accession of James the Sixth to the throne of England. It is said never to have been inhabited afterwards save by a lone old woman, who, unable to get any other house, took up her residence in one of its desolate and dreary apartments. She must have been possessed either of a very superior mind, or of very stout resolution. The old, gray, massive fortalice of Lord Soulis, as it looms into sight in its green secluded valley, inspires a feeling somewhat akin to awe even in the present day; in a bypast age, amongst the common people, the feeling was one of pure terror. The casual wayfarer eyed the grim spectral ruin with suspicion even in the daytime; in the gray of gloaming, or in the night, he shunned its vicinity

[1] Some heralds say, that they carried cinque-foils, others trefoils; but all agree they bore some such distinction to mark their cadency from the elder branch of Douglas.

altogether.'—Note in LEYDEN'S *Poems and Ballads*, 1858 p. 227.]

At the Skelf-hill, the cauldron still
The men of Liddesdale can show.—St. lxvi. ll. 1-2.

['The cauldron—the *muckle pot* of the Skelf-hill—in which Sir William was reported to have been boiled, is an old kail-pot of no very extraordinary size, which was purchased of some of the followers of the rebel army in 1715.'—Note in LEYDEN'S *Poems and Ballads*, 1858, p. 231.]

THE COUT OF KEELDAR

BY J. LEYDEN

The tradition on which the following ballad is founded derives considerable illustration from the argument of the preceding. It is necessary to add, that the most redoubted adversary of Lord Soulis was the Chief of Keeldar, a Northumbrian district, adjacent to Cumberland, who perished in a sudden encounter on the banks of the Hermitage. Being arrayed in armour of proof, he sustained no hurt in the combat; but stumbling in retreating across the river, the hostile party held him down below water with their lances till he died; and the eddy, in which he perished, is still called the Cout of Keeldar's Pool. His grave, of gigantic size, is pointed out on the banks of the Hermitage, at the western corner of a wall, surrounding the burial-ground of a ruined chapel.[1] As an enemy of Lord Soulis, his memory is revered; and the

[1] ['Westward from Hermitage Castle, there is a burying-ground, within which, as may be perceived from the fragments of sculptured stone strewed about, there had formerly been a chapel. In this burying-ground tradition points out the Cout of Keeldar's grave, but the swelling turf, near nine feet long, which was supposed to indicate his gigantic stature, scarcely now rises above the surrounding sward. The Cout's grave, as it was first pointed out to me in 1828, is on the south side of the burying-ground, about four paces to the south of a flat coffin-shaped stone, which forms the covering of an adjacent grave.' —*Rambles in Northumberland* in 1835, pp. 167-8. Quoted in Leyden's *Poems and Ballads*, 1858, p. 232.]

popular epithet of *Cout, i.e.* Colt,[1] is expressive of his strength, stature, and activity. Tradition likewise relates, that the young Chief of Mangerton, to whose protection Lord Soulis had, in some imminent jeopardy, been indebted for his life, was decoyed by that faithless tyrant into his castle of Hermitage, and insidiously murdered at a feast.

The Keeldar Stone, by which the Northumbrian chief passed in his incursion, is still pointed out, as a boundary-mark, on the confines of Jed Forest, and Northumberland. It is a rough insulated mass, of considerable dimensions, and it is held unlucky to ride thrice *withershins*[2] around it. Keeldar Castle is now a hunting-seat, belonging to the Duke of Northumberland.

The *Brown Man of the Muirs* is a Fairy of the most malignant order, the genuine *duergar*. Walsingham mentions a story of an unfortunate youth, whose brains were extracted from his skull, during his sleep, by this malicious being. Owing to this operation, he remained insane many years, till the Virgin Mary courteously restored his brains to their station.

[1] ['*Cout* is explained by Mr. Leyden to mean *Colt*. If the country-people really designate him as *Cout* of Keeldar, they probably mean *Chief* of Keeldar:—

. . . 'Muse I do,
A shepherd thus should blaize
The Coot of beauty . . . .'
WARNER'S *Albion*.

MS. Letter of JOHN FINLAY to W. S., 27th March 1803.—J. G. L.]

[2] *Widdershins*, German, *Widdersins*, a direction contrary to the course of the sun; from left, namely, to right.

THE COUT OF KEELDAR

BY J. LEYDEN

I

THE eiry blood-hound howled by night,
The streamers[1] flaunted red,
Till broken streaks of flaky light
O'er Keeldar's mountains spread.

II

The lady sigh'd as Keeldar rose:
'Come tell me, dear love mine,
Go you to hunt where Keeldar flows,
Or on the banks of Tyne?'

III

'The heath-bell blows where Keeldar flows,
By Tyne the primrose pale;
But now we ride on the Scottish side,
To hunt in Liddesdale.'

IV

'Gin you will ride on the Scottish side,
Sore must thy Margaret mourn;

[1] *Streamers*, Northern Lights.

For Soulis abhorr'd is Lydall's lord,
And I fear you 'll ne'er return.

V

'The axe he bears, it hacks and tears;
'Tis formed of an earth-fast flint;
No armour of knight, tho' ever so wight,
Can bear its deadly dint.

VI

'No danger he fears, for a charm'd sword he wears;
Of adderstone the hilt;
No Tynedale knight had ever such might,
But his heart-blood was spilt.'

VII

'In my plume is seen the holly green,
With the leaves of the rowan-tree;
And my casque of sand, by a mermaid's hand,
Was formed beneath the sea.

VIII

'Then, Margaret dear, have thou no fear!
That bodes no ill to me,
Though never a knight, by mortal might,
Could match his gramarye.'—

IX

Then forward bound both horse and hound,
And rattle o'er the vale;
As the wintry breeze, through leafless trees,
Drives on the pattering hail.

X

Behind their course the English fells
In deepening blue retire;
Till soon before them boldly swells
The muir of dun Redswire.

XI

And when they reach'd the Redswire high,
Soft beam'd the rising sun;
But formless shadows seem'd to fly
Along the muir-land dun.

XII

And when he reach'd the Redswire high,
His bugle Keeldar blew;
And round did float, with clamorous note
And scream, the hoarse curlew.

XIII

The next blast that young Keeldar blew,
The wind grew deadly still;
But the sleek fern, with fingery leaves,
Waved wildly o'er the hill.

XIV

The third blast that young Keeldar blew,
Still stood the limber fern;
And a Wee Man, of swarthy hue,
Up started by a cairn.

XV

His russet weeds were brown as heath,
That clothes the upland fell;
And the hair of his head was frizzly red,
As the purple heather-bell.

XVI

An urchin[1] clad in prickles red,
Clung cowering to his arm;
The hounds they howl'd, and backward fled,
As struck by Fairy charm.

XVII

'Why rises high the stag-hound's cry,
Where stag-hound ne'er should be?
Why wakes that horn the silent morn,
Without the leave of me?'

XVIII

'Brown dwarf, that o'er the muirland strays,
Thy name to Keeldar tell!'—
'The Brown Man of the Muirs, who stays
Beneath the heather-bell.

[1] *Urchin*, hedgehog.

XIX

'Tis sweet, beneath the heather-bell,
To live in autumn brown;
And sweet to hear the lav'rocks swell
Far, far from tower and town.

XX

'But woe betide the shrilling horn,
The chase's surly cheer!
And ever that hunter is forlorn,
Whom first at morn I hear.'

XXI

Says, 'Weal nor woe, nor friend nor foe,
'In thee we hope nor dread.'
But, ere the bugles green could blow,
The Wee Brown Man had fled.

XXII

And onward, onward, hound and horse,
Young Keeldar's band have gone;
And soon they wheel, in rapid course,
Around the Keeldar Stone.

XXIII

Green vervain round its base did creep,
A powerful seed that bore;
And oft, of yore, its channels deep
Were stain'd with human gore.

XXIV

And still, when blood-drops, clotted thin,
Hang the grey moss upon,
The spirit murmurs from within,
And shakes the rocking-stone.

XXV

Around, around, young Keeldar wound,
And call'd, in scornful tone,
With him to pass the barrier ground,
The Spirit of the Stone.

XXVI

The rude crag rock'd; 'I come for death,
I come to work thy woe!'
And 'twas the Brown Man of the Heath,
That murmur'd from below.

XXVII

But onward, onward, Keeldar pass'd,
Swift as the winter wind,
When, hovering on the driving blast,
The snow-flakes fall behind.

XXVIII

They pass'd the muir of berries blae,
The stone cross on the lee;
They reach'd the green, the bonny brae,
Beneath the birchen tree.

XXIX

This is the bonny brae, the green,
Yet sacred to the brave,
Where still, of ancient size, is seen
Gigantic Keeldar's grave.

XXX

The lonely shepherd loves to mark
The daisy springing fair,
Where weeps the birch of silver bark,
With long dishevell'd hair.

XXXI

The grave is green, and round is spread
The curling lady-fern;
That fatal day the mould was red,
No moss was on the cairn.

XXXII

And next they pass'd the chapel there;
The holy ground was by,
Where many a stone is sculptured fair,
To mark where warriors lie.

XXXIII

And here, beside the mountain flood,
A massy castle frown'd,
Since first the Pictish race in blood
The haunted pile did found.

XXXIV

The restless stream its rocky base
Assails with ceaseless din;
And many a troubled spirit strays
The dungeons dark within.

XXXV

Soon from the lofty tower there hied
A knight across the vale;
'I greet your master well,' he cried,
'From Soulis of Liddesdale.

XXXVI

'He heard your bugle's echoing call,
In his green garden bower;
And bids you to his festive hall,
Within his ancient tower.'

XXXVII

Young Keeldar call'd his hunter train;
'For doubtful cheer prepare!
And, as you open force disdain,
Of secret guile beware.

XXXVIII

''Twas here for Mangerton's brave lord
A bloody feast was set,
Who, weetless, at the festal board,
The bull's broad frontlet met.

XXXIX

'Then ever, at uncourteous feast,
Keep every man his brand;
And, as you 'mid his friends are placed,
Range on the better hand.

XL

'And, if the bull's ill-omen'd head
Appear to grace the feast,
Your whingers, with unerring speed,
Plunge in each neigbour's breast.'—

XLI

In Hermitage they sat at dine,
In pomp and proud array;
And oft they filled the blood-red wine,
While merry minstrels play.

XLII

And many a hunting song they sung,
And song of game and glee;
Then tuned to plaintive strains their tongue,
'Of Scotland's luve and lee.'

XLIII

To wilder measures next they turn:
'The Black Black Bull of Noroway!'
Sudden the tapers cease to burn,
The minstrels cease to play.

XLIV

Each hunter bold, of Keeldar's train,
Sat an enchanted man;
For cold as ice, through every vein,
The freezing life-blood ran.

XLV

Each rigid hand the whinger wrung,
Each gazed with glaring eye;
But Keeldar from the table sprung,
Unharmed by gramarye.

XLVI

He burst the doors; the roofs resound;
With yells the castle rung;
Before him, with a sudden bound,
His favourite blood-hound sprung.

XLVII

Ere he could pass, the door was barr'd;
And, grating harsh from under,
With creaking, jarring noise, was heard
A sound like distant thunder.

XLVIII

The iron clash, the grinding sound,
Announce the dire sword-mill;
The piteous howlings of the hound
The dreadful dungeon fill.

XLIX

With breath drawn in, the murderous crew
Stood listening to the yell;
And greater still their wonder grew,
As on their ear it fell.

L

They listen'd for a human shriek
Amid the jarring sound;
They only heard, in echoes weak,
The murmurs of the hound.

LI

The death-bell rung, and wide were flung
The castle gates amain;
While hurry out the armèd rout,
And marshal on the plain.

LII

Ah! ne'er before in Border feud
Was seen so dire a fray!
Through glittering lances Keeldar hew'd
A red corse-paven way.

LIII

His helmet, formed of mermaid sand,
No lethal brand could dint;
No other arms could e'er withstand
The axe of earth-fast flint.

LIV

In Keeldar's plume the holly green,
And rowan leaves, nod on,
And vain Lord Soulis's sword was seen,
Though the hilt was adderstone.

LV

Then up the Wee Brown Man he rose,
By Soulis of Liddesdale;
'In vain,' he said, 'a thousand blows
Assail the charmed mail.

LVI

'In vain by land your arrows glide,
In vain your faulchions gleam—
No spell can stay the living tide,
Or charm the rushing stream.'

LVII

And now young Keeldar reach'd the stream,
Above the foamy linn;
The Border lances round him gleam,
And force the warrior in.

LVIII

The holly floated to the side,
And the leaf of the rowan pale:
Alas! no spell could charm the tide,
Nor the lance of Liddesdale.

LIX

Swift was the Cout o' Keeldar's course,
Along the lily lee;
But home came never hound nor horse,
And never home came he.

LX

Where weeps the birch with branches green,
Without the holy ground,
Between two old gray stones is seen
The warrior's ridgy mound.

LXI

And the hunters bold, of Keeldar's train,
Within yon castle's wall,
In a deadly sleep must aye remain,
Till the ruined towers down fall.

LXII

Each in his hunter's garb array'd,
Each holds his bugle horn;
Their keen hounds at their feet are laid,
That ne'er shall wake the morn.

NOTES

ON

THE COUT OF KEELDAR

'Tis formed of an earth-fast flint.—St. v. l. 2.

An earth-fast stone, or an insulated stone, enclosed in a bed of earth, is supposed to possess peculiar properties. It is frequently applied to sprains and bruises, and used to dissipate swellings; but its blow is reckoned uncommonly severe.

Of adderstone the hilt.—St. vi. l. 2.

The adderstone, among the Scottish peasantry, is held in almost as high veneration, as, among the Gauls, the *ovum anguinum*, described by Pliny.—*Natural History*, l. xxix. c. 3. The name is applied to celts, and other round perforated stones. The vulgar suppose them to be perforated by the stings of adders.

With the leaves of the rowan-tree.—St. vii. l. 2.

The rowan-tree, or mountain-ash, is still used by the peasantry, to avert the effects of charms and witchcraft. An inferior degree of the same influence is supposed to reside in many evergreens; as the holly and the bay. With the leaves of the bay, the English and Welsh peasants were lately accustomed to adorn their doors at Midsummer.—*Vide* Brand's *Vulgar Antiquities*. [For various examples of the use of the rowan-tree as a charm against witchcraft, see Frazer's *Golden Bough*, iii. 132-3, 262, 265, and 406. Cf. also Henderson's *Folklore of Northern Counties*, pp. 224-226; and Aubrey's *Gentilisme and Judaisme*, p. 247.]

And shakes the rocking-stone.—St. xxiv. l. 4.

The rocking-stone, commonly reckoned a Druidical monument, has always been held in superstitious veneration by the people. The popular opinion, which supposes them to be inhabited by a spirit, coincides with that of the ancient Icelanders, who worshipped the demons, which they believed to inhabit great stones. It is related in the *Kristni Saga*, chap. 2, that the first Icelandic bishop, by chanting a hymn over one of these sacred stones, immediately after his arrival in the island, split it, expelled the spirit, and converted its worshippers to Christianity. The herb vervain, revered by the Druids, was also reckoned a powerful charm by the common people; and the author recollects a popular rhyme, supposed to be addressed to a young woman by the devil, who attempted to seduce her in the shape of a handsome young man :—

> 'Gin ye wish to be leman mine,
> Lay off the St. John's wort and the vervine.'

By his repugnance to these sacred plants, his mistress discovered the cloven foot.

Since first the Pictish race in blood.—St. xxxiii. l. 3.

Castles, remarkable for size, strength, and antiquity, are, by the common people, commonly attributed to the Picts, or Pechs, who are not supposed to have trusted solely to their skill in masonry, in constructing these edifices, but are believed to have bathed the foundation-stone with human blood, in order to propitiate the spirit of the soil. Similar to this is the Gaelic tradition, according to which St. Columba is supposed to have been forced to bury St. Oran alive, beneath the foundation of his monastery, in order to propitiate the spirits of the soil, who demolished by night what was built during the day.

And, if the bull's ill-omen'd head, etc.—St. xl. l. 1.

To present a bull's head before a person at a feast, was, in the ancient turbulent times of Scotland, a

common signal for his assassination. Thus, Lindsay of Pitscottie relates in his History, p. 17, that, 'efter the dinner was endit, once alle the delicate courses taken away, the Chancellor (Sir William Crichton) presentit the bullis head befoir the Earle of Douglas, in signe and toaken of condemnation to the death.'

Then tuned to plaintive strains their tongue,
'Of Scotland's luve and lee.'—St. xlii. ll. 3-4.

The most ancient Scottish song known is that which is here alluded to, and is thus given by Wintoun, in his *Chronykil,* vol. i. p. 401 :—

'Quhen Alysandyr our kyng wes dede,
That Scotland led in luve and le,
Away wes sons of ale and brede,
Of wyne and wax, of gamyn and gle:

'Oure gold wes changyd into lede,
Cryst, borne into virgynyte,
Succour Scotland and remede,
That stad is in perplexyte.'

That alluded to in the following verse, is a wild fanciful popular tale of enchantment, termed *The Black Bull of Noroway.* The author is inclined to believe it the same story with the romance of the *Three Futtit Dog of Noroway,* the title of which is mentioned in the *Complaynt of Scotland.*

The iron clash, the grinding sound,
Announce the dire sword-mill.—St. xlviii. ll. 1-2.

The author is unable to produce any authority that the execrable machine, the sword-mill, so well known on the Continent, was ever employed in Scotland ; but he believes the vestiges of something very similar have been discovered in the ruins of old castles.

No spell can stay the living tide.—St. lvi. l. 3.

That no species of magic had any effect over a running stream, was a common opinion among the vulgar, and is alluded to in Burns's admirable tale of *Tam o' Shanter.*

THE MERMAID

J. LEYDEN

The following poem is founded upon a Gaelic traditional ballad, called 'Macphail of Colonsay, and the Mermaid of Corrivrekin.' The dangerous gulf of Corrievrekin lies between the islands of Jura and Scarba, and the superstition of the islanders has tenanted its shelves and eddies with all the fabulous monsters and demons of the ocean. Among these, according to a universal tradition, the Mermaid is the most remarkable. In her dwelling, and in her appearance, the mermaid of the northern nations resembles the siren of the ancients. The appendages of a comb and mirror are probably of Celtic invention.[1]

The Gaelic story bears, that Macphail of Colonsay was carried off by a mermaid, while passing the gulf above mentioned: that they resided together, in a grotto beneath the sea, for several years, during which time she bore him five children: but, finally, he tired of her society, and, having prevailed upon her to carry him near the shore of Colonsay, he escaped to land.

The inhabitants of the Isle of Man have a number

[1] [There is no ground for such a supposition. Mermaids are uniformly represented as having long hair, and when observed on rocks are almost necessarily represented as 'doing their hair,' for the very palpable reason that it becomes wet and dishevelled when they are in the water.]

of such stories, which may be found in Waldron. One bears, that a very beautiful mermaid fell in love with a young shepherd, who kept his flocks beside a creek much frequented by these marine people. She frequently caressed him, and brought him presents of coral, fine pearls, and every valuable production of the ocean. Once upon a time, as she threw her arms eagerly round him, he suspected her of a design to draw him into the sea, and, struggling hard, disengaged himself from her embrace, and ran away. But the mermaid resented either the suspicion, or the disappointment, so highly, that she threw a stone after him, and flung herself into the sea, whence she never returned. The youth, though but slightly struck with the pebble, felt, from that moment, the most excruciating agony, and died at the end of seven days.—WALDRON'S *Works*, p. 176.

Another tradition of the same island affirms, that one of these amphibious damsels was caught in a net, and brought to land, by some fishers, who had spread a snare on the denizens of the ocean. She was shaped like the most beautiful female down to the waist, but below trailed a voluminous fish's tail, with spreading fins. As she would neither eat nor speak (though they knew she had the power of language), they became apprehensive that the island would be visited with some strange calamity, if she should die for want of food; and, therefore, on the third night, they left the door open, that she might escape. Accordingly, she did not fail to embrace the opportunity; but, gliding with incredible swiftness to the seaside, she plunged herself into the waters, and was welcomed by a number of her own species, who were heard to inquire what

she had seen among the natives of the earth? 'Nothing,' she answered, 'wonderful, except that they were silly enough to throw away the water in which they had boiled their eggs.'

Collins, in his notes upon the line,

'Mona, long hid from those who sail the main,'

explains it, by a similar Celtic tradition. It seems, a mermaid had become so much charmed with a young man, who walked upon the beach, that she made love to him; and, being rejected with scorn, she excited, by enchantment, a mist, which long concealed the island from all navigators.

I must mention another Mankish tradition, because, being derived from the common source of Celtic mythology, they appear the most natural illustrations of the Hebridean tale. About fifty years before Waldron went to reside in Man (for there were living witnesses of the legend, when he was upon the island), a project was undertaken to fish treasures up from the deep by means of a diving-bell. A venturous fellow, accordingly, descended, and kept pulling for more rope, till all they had on board was expended. This must have been no small quantity, for a skilful mathematician, who was on board, judging, from the proportion of line let down, declared that the adventurer must have descended at least double the number of leagues which the moon is computed to be distant from the earth. At such a depth wonders might be expected, and wonderful was the account given by the adventurer, when drawn up to the air.

'After,' said he, 'I had passed the region of fishes, I descended into a pure element, clear as

the air in the serenest and most unclouded day, through which, as I passed, I saw the bottom of the watery world, paved with coral, and a shining kind of pebbles, which glittered like the sunbeams, reflected on a glass. I longed to tread the delightful paths, and never felt more exquisite delight than when the machine I was inclosed in, grazed upon it.

'On looking through the little windows of my prison, I saw large streets and squares on every side, ornamented with huge pyramids of crystal, not inferior in brightness to the finest diamonds; and the most beautiful building, not of stone, nor brick, but of mother-of-pearl, and embossed in various figures, with shells of all colours. The passage, which led to one of these magnificent apartments, being open, I endeavoured, with my whole strength, to move my enclosure towards it; which I did, though with great difficulty, and very slowly. At last, however, I got entrance into a very spacious room, in the midst of which stood a large amber table, with several chairs round, of the same. The floor of it was composed of rough diamonds, topazes, emeralds, rubies, and pearls. Here I doubted not but to make my voyage as profitable as it was pleasant; for, could I have brought with me but a few of these, they would have been of more value than all we could hope for in a thousand wrecks; but they were so closely wedged in, and so strongly cemented by time, that they were not to be unfastened. I saw several chains, carcanets, and rings, of all manner of precious stones, finely cut, and set after our manner; which, I suppose, had been the prize of the winds and waves: these were hanging loosely on the jasper walls, by strings made of rushes, which I might easily have taken

down; but, as I had edged myself within half a foot reach of them, I was unfortunately drawn back through your want of line. In my return, I saw several comely *mermen*, and beautiful *mermaids*, the inhabitants of this blissful realm, swiftly descending towards it; but they seemed frighted at my appearance, and glided at a distance from me, taking me, no doubt, for some monstrous and new-created species.'—WALDRON, *ibidem.*

It would be very easy to enlarge this introduction, by quoting a variety of authors concerning the supposed existence of these marine people. The reader may consult the *Telliamed* of M. Maillet, who, in support of the Neptunist system of geology, has collected a variety of legends, respecting mermen and mermaids, p. 230, *et sequen.* Much information may also be derived from Pontopiddan's *Natural History of Norway*, who fails not to people her seas with this amphibious race.[1] An older authority is to be found in the *Kongs shugg-sio*, or *Royal Mirror*, written, as it is believed, about 1170. The mermen, there mentioned, are termed *haf-strambur* (sea-giants), and are said to have the upper parts resembling the human race; but the author, with becoming diffidence, declines to state, positively, whether they are equipped with a dolphin's tail. The female monster is called *Mar-Gyga* (sea-giantess), and is averred certainly to drag a fish's train. She appears, generally, in the act of devour-

[1] I believe something to the same purpose may be found in the school editions of Guthrie's *Geographical Grammar*; a work which, though, in general, as sober and dull as could be desired by the gravest preceptor, becomes of a sudden uncommonly lively, upon the subject of the seas of Norway; the author having thought meet to adopt the Right Reverend Erick Pontopiddan's account of mermen, sea-snakes, and krakens.

ing fish, which she has caught. According to the apparent voracity of her appetite, the sailors pretend to guess what chance they had of saving their lives in the tempests, which always followed her appearance.—*Speculum Regale*, 1768, p. 166.

Mermaids were sometimes supposed to be possessed of supernatural powers. Resenius, in his Life of Frederick II., gives us an account of a siren, who not only prophesied future events, but, as might have been expected from the element in which she dwelt, preached vehemently against the sin of drunkenness.

The mermaid of Corrivrekin possessed the power of occasionally resigning her scaly train; and the Celtic tradition bears, that when, from choice or necessity, she was invested with that appendage, her manners were more stern and savage than when her form was entirely human. Of course, she warned her lover not to come into her presence when she was thus transformed. This belief is alluded to in the following ballad.

The beauty of the sirens is celebrated in the old romances of chivalry. Doolin, upon beholding, for the first time in his life, a beautiful female, exclaims, '*Par sainte Marie, si belle créature ne vis je oncque en ma vie! Je crois que c'est un ange du ciel, ou une seraine de mer; Je crois que homme n'engendra oncque si belle créature.*'—La Fleur de Battailles.

I cannot help adding, that some late evidence has been produced, serving to show, either that imagination played strange tricks with the witnesses, or that the existence of mermaids is no longer a matter of question. I refer to the letters written to Sir John Sinclair, by the spectators of such a phenomenon, in the bay of Sandside, in Caithness.

[In *Scenes and Legends of the North of Scotland,* Hugh Miller refers to the acquaintanceship of the people of Cromarty with the Mermaid. For a story of the dealings of the Laird of Borgie, in Sutherland, with a mermaid, see J. Macdonald, *Religion and Myth,* vol. iii. p. 191, and for the marriage of a Welsh fisherman and a mermaid and its tragic results, see Rhys' *Celtic Folklore,* pp. 117-121. Cf. also the story of the 'Sea Maiden' in J. F. Campbell's *Tales of the West Highlands,* vol. i. pp. 72-4.

A copy of 'The Mermaid,' appended to *Description of the Spar Cave lately discovered in the Isle of Skye,* by K. Macleay, M.D., 1811 (for directing my attention to which I am indebted to Messrs. Blackwood), contains some additional stanzas, and a good many various readings, a few of which are preferable to those in the *Minstrelsy* version. The copy is evidently the genuine production of Leyden—possibly sent to some journal before its appearance in the *Minstrelsy.* See footnotes to the text.]

TO THE RIGHT HONOURABLE

LADY CHARLOTTE CAMPBELL[1]

WITH

THE MERMAID

To brighter charms depart, my simple lay,
Than graced of old the maid of Colonsay,
When her fond lover, lessening from her view,
With eyes reverted o'er the surge withdrew;
But happier still, should lovely Campbell sing
Thy plaintive numbers to the trembling string,
The mermaid's melting strains would yield to thee,
Though pour'd diffusive o'er the silver sea.

Go boldly forth—but ah! the listening throng,
Rapt by the siren, would forget the song!
Lo! while they pause, nor dare to gaze around,
Afraid to break the soft enchanting sound,
While swells to sympathy each fluttering heart,
'Tis not the poet's, but the siren's art.

Go forth, devoid of fear, my simple lay!
First heard, returning from Iona's bay,
When round our bark the shades of evening drew,
And broken slumbers prest our weary crew.
While round the prow the sea-fire, flashing bright,
Shed a strange lustre o'er the waste of night;

[1] [Daughter of John, fifth Duke of Argyle—now Lady Charlotte Bury.—J. G. L.]

While harsh and dismal scream'd the diving gull,
Round the dark rocks that wall the coast of Mull;
As through black reefs we held our venturous way,
I caught the wild traditionary lay;—
A wreath, no more in black Iona's isle
To bloom—but graced by high-born Beauty's smile.

J. L.

THE MERMAID

I

On Jura's heath[1] how sweetly swell
The murmurs of the mountain bee!
How softly mourns the writhèd[2] shell,
Of Jura's shore, its parent sea!

II

But softer, floating o'er the deep,
The mermaid's sweet sea-soothing[3] lay,
That charm'd the dancing waves to sleep,
Before the bark of Colonsay.

III

Aloft the purple pennons wave,
As parting gay from Crinan's[4] shore,
From Morven's wars the seamen brave
Their gallant Chieftain homeward bore.[5]

IV

In youth's gay bloom, the brave Macphail
Still blamed the lingering bark's delay;

[1] ['shore.'—M.] [2] ['wreathed.'—M.] [3] ['sweetly-soothing.'—M.] [4] ['Orna's.'—M.]

[5] ['Their gallant chief, the seamen brave,
From Lorn's dread combat homeward bore.'—M.]

For her he chid the flagging sail,
The lovely maid of Colonsay.

V

'And raise,' he cried, 'the song of love,
The maiden sung with tearful smile,
When first o'er Jura's hills to rove,
We left afar the lonely isle!

VI [1]

'When on his ring of ruby red
Shall die,' she said, 'the crimson hue,
Know that thy favourite fair is dead,
Or proves to thee and love untrue.'

VII

Now, lightly poised, the rising oar
Disperses wide the foamy spray,
And, echoing far o'er Crinan's [2] shore,
Resounds the song of Colonsay.

[1] [The following stanza is in M. interpolated before stanza vi. :—

'I saw the tear-drop on her cheek,
Her eyes in dewy lustre shine,
And as she spoke, with pressure weak,
Her hands she fondly clasped in mine.'

Stanza vi. also reads :—

'When from the ring of ruby red
Fades the pellucid crimson hue,
Thy fair is number'd with the dead,
Or proves to thee and love untrue.']

[2] ['Orna's.'—M.]

VIII

'Softly blow, thou western breeze,
Softly rustle through the sail!
Soothe to rest the furrowy seas,
Before my love, sweet western gale![1]

IX

'Where the wave is tinged with red,
And the russet sea-leaves grow,
Mariners, with prudent dread,[2]
Shun the shelving reefs below.

X

As you pass through Jura's sound,
Bend your course by Scarba's shore,
Shun, O shun, the gulf profound,
Where Corrivrekin's surges roar!

XI

If,[3] from that unbottom'd deep,
With wrinkled form and writhèd train,
O'er the verge of Scarba's steep,
The sea-snake heave his snowy mane,

XII[4]

'Unwarp, unwind his oozy coils,
Sea-green sisters of the main,

[1] [The couplet in M. reads:—
'While my love is on the seas,
Softly blow, thou western gale!']

[2] ['devoid of dread.'—M.] [3] ['Lest.'—M.] [4] [In this stanza there is in M. an inversion of the rhyme, and it begins with l. 2.]

And, in the gulf,[1] where ocean boils,
The unwieldy wallowing monster chain.

XIII[2]

'Softly blow, thou western breeze,
Softly rustle through the sail!
Soothe to rest the furrow'd seas,
Before my love, sweet western gale!'

XIV

Thus, all to soothe the Chieftain's woe,
Far from the maid he loved so dear,
The song arose, so soft and slow,
He seem'd her parting sigh to hear.

XV

The lonely deck he paces o'er,
Impatient for the rising day,
And still, from Crinan's[3] moonlight shore,
He turns his eyes to Colonsay.

[1] ['Far in the deep.'—M.]

[2] [Instead of this stanza, we have in M. the following three:—

'Ne'er, my Love, in combat fierce,
Yield to foes the forward lance,
Doom'd opposing breasts to pierce,
Rapid as the lover's glance.

'Ne'er, my Love, in fields of fight,
Yield thy temper'd keen claymore,
Till the splinters sparkle bright,
Round thee in the combat's roar.

'Ne'er, my Love, by foes oppress'd,
The dirk that pierces deep forego,
Till plung'd within the warrior's breast,
He, staggering, sinks beneath the blow.']

[3] ['Orna's.'—M.]

XVI

The moonbeams crisp the curling surge,
That streaks with foam the ocean green;
While forward still the rowers urge
Their course, a female form was seen.

XVII

That sea-maid's form, of pearly light,
Was whiter than the downy spray,
And round her bosom, heaving bright,
Her glossy, yellow ringlets play.

XVIII

Borne on a foamy-crested wave,
She reached amain the bounding prow,
Then, clasping fast the Chieftain brave,
She, plunging, sought the deep below.

XIX

Ah! long beside thy feignèd bier,
The monks the prayers of death shall say,
And long for thee, the fruitless tear
Shall weep the Maid of Colonsay!

XX

But downwards, like a powerless corse,
The eddying[1] waves the Chieftain bear;
He only heard[2] the moaning hoarse
Of waters, murmuring in his ear.

[1] ['edging.'—M. Clearly a mistake.] [2] ['hears.'—M.]

XXI

The murmurs sink, by slow degrees;
No more the surges round him rave;
Lull'd by the music of the seas,
He lies within[1] a coral cave.

XXII

In dreamy mood reclines he long,
Nor dares his trancèd[2] eyes unclose,
Till, warbling wild, the sea-maid's song,
Far in the crystal cavern, rose;

XXIII

Soft as that harp's unseen control,
In morning dreams that lovers hear,
Whose strains steal sweetly o'er the soul,
But never reach the waking ear.

XXIV

As sunbeams, through the tepid air,
When clouds dissolve the dews unseen,
Smile[3] on the flowers, that bloom more fair,
And fields, that grow with livelier green—

XXV

So melting soft the music fell;
It seemed to soothe the fluttering spray—
'Say, heard'st thou not these wild notes swell?'
'Ah! 'tis the song of Colonsay.'

[1] ['beneath.'—M.] [2] ['dazzl'd.'—M.] [3] ['Shine.'—M.]

XXVI

Like one that from a fearful dream
Awakes, the morning light to view,
And joys to see the purple beam,
Yet fears to find the vision true,—

XXVII

He heard that strain, so wildly sweet,
Which bade his torpid languor fly;
He fear'd some spell had bound his feet,
And hardly dared his limbs to try.

XXVIII

'This yellow sand, this sparry cave,
Shall bend thy soul to beauty's sway;
Canst thou the maiden of the wave
Compare to her of Colonsay?'

XXIX

Roused by that voice, of silver sound,
From the paved floor he lightly sprung,
And, glancing wild his eyes around,
Where the fair nymph[1] her tresses wrung,[2]

XXX

No form he saw of mortal mould;
It shone like ocean's snowy foam;
Her ringlets waved in living gold,
Her mirror crystal, pearl her comb.

[1] ['sea-nymph.'—M.] [2] ['hung.'—M. Seemingly a misprint.]

XXXI

Her pearly comb the siren took,
And careless bound her tresses wild;
Still o'er the mirror stole her look,
As on the wondering youth she smiled.

XXXII

Like music from the greenwood tree,
Again she raised the melting lay;
—'Fair warrior, wilt thou dwell with me,
And leave the Maid of Colonsay?

XXXIII

'Fair is the crystal hall for me,
With rubies and with emeralds set,
And sweet the music of the sea
Shall sing, when we for love are met.

XXXIV

'How sweet to dance, with gliding feet,
Along the level tide so green,
Responsive to the cadence sweet,
That breathes along the moonlight scene![1]

XXXV

'And soft the music of the main
Rings from the motley tortoise-shell,
While moonbeams, o'er the watery plain,
Seem trembling in its fitful swell.

[1] ['the moonlight beam.'—M.]

XXXVI

'How sweet, when billows heave their head,
And shake their snowy crests on high,
Serene in Ocean's sapphire-bed,
Beneath the tumbling surge, to lie;

XXXVII

'To trace, with tranquil step, the deep,
Where pearly drops of frozen dew
In concave shells, unconscious, sleep,
Or shine with lustre, silvery blue!

XXXVIII

'Then shall the summer sun, from far,
Pour through the wave a softer ray,
While diamonds, in a[1] bower of spar,
At eve shall shed a brighter day.

XXXIX

'Nor stormy wind, nor wintry gale,
That o'er the angry ocean sweep,
Shall e'er our coral groves assail,
Calm in the bosom of the deep.

XL

'Through the green meads beneath the sea,
Enamour'd, we shall fondly stray—
Then, gentle warrior, dwell with me,
And leave the Maid of Colonsay!'—

[1] ['our.'—M.]

XLI

'Though bright thy locks of glistering[1] gold,
Fair maiden[2] of the foamy main!
Thy life-blood is the water cold,
While mine beats high in[3] every vein.

XLII

'If I, beneath thy sparry cave,
Should in thy snowy arms recline,
Inconstant as the restless wave,
My heart would grow as cold as thine.'

XLIII

As cygnet down, proud swell'd her breast;
Her eye confest the pearly tear;
His hand she to her bosom press'd—
'Is there no heart for rapture here?

XLIV

These limbs, sprung from the lucid sea,
Does no warm blood their currents fill,
No heart-pulse riot, wild and free,
To joy, to love's delirious thrill?'

XLV

'Though all the splendour of the sea
Around thy faultless beauty shine,
That heart, that riots wild and free,
Can hold no sympathy with mine.

[1] ['glistening.'—M.] [2] ['syren.'—M.] [3] ['warm thro'.'—M.]

XLVI

'These sparkling eyes, so wild and gay,
They swim not in the light of love:
The beauteous Maid of Colonsay,
Her eyes are milder than the dove!

XLVII

'Even now, within the lonely isle,
Her eyes are dim with tears for me;
And canst thou think that siren smile
Can lure my soul to dwell with thee?'

XLVIII

An oozy film her limbs o'erspread;
Unfolds in length her scaly train;
She tossed, in proud disdain, her head,
And lash'd, with webbed fin, the main.

XLIX

'Dwell here, alone!' the mermaid[1] cried,
'And view far off the sea-nymphs play;
Thy prison-wall, the azure tide,
Shall bar thy steps from Colonsay.

L

'Whene'er, like Ocean's scaly brood,
I cleave, with rapid fin, the wave,[2]

[1] ['she furious.'—M.]

[2] [The couplet in M. reads thus:—

'If e'er with fins like ocean's brood,
Thou see'st me cleave the glassy wave.']

Far from the daughter of the flood,
Conceal thee in this coral[1] cave.

LI

'I feel my former soul return ;[2]
It kindles at[3] thy cold disdain :
And has a mortal dared to spurn
A daughter of the foamy main ?'[4]

LII

She fled ; around the crystal cave
The rolling waves resume their road,
On the broad portal[5] idly rave,
But enter not the nymph's abode.

LIII

And many a weary night went by,
As in the lonely cave he lay,
And many a sun roll'd through the sky,
And pour'd its beams on Colonsay.

LIV

And oft, beneath the silver moon,
He heard afar the mermaid sing,
And oft, to many a melting tune,
The shell-formed lyres of ocean ring ;

[1] ['inmost.'—M.] [2] ['revive.'—M.] [3] ['my soul reflects.'—M.] [4] [The couplet in M. reads :—

'Nor shall a mortal boast alive,
To scorn a daughter of the main.'—M.]

[5] ['Around the chieftain.'—M.]

LV

And when the moon went down the sky,
Still rose, in dreams, his native plain,
And oft he thought his love was by,
And charm'd him with some tender strain ;

LVI

And, heart-sick, oft he waked to weep,
When ceased that voice of silver sound,
And thought to plunge him in the deep,
That wall'd his crystal cavern round.

LVII

But still the ring, of ruby red,
Retain'd its vivid crimson hue,
And each despairing accent fled,
To find his gentle love so true.

LVIII

When seven long lonely months were gone,
The mermaid to his cavern came,
No more misshapen from the zone,
But like a maid of mortal frame.

LIX

'O give to me that ruby ring,
That on thy finger glances gay,
And thou shalt hear the mermaid sing
The song, thou lovest, of Colonsay.'

LX

'This ruby ring, of crimson grain,
Shall on thy finger glitter gay,
If thou wilt bear me through the main,
Again to visit Colonsay.'

LXI

'Except thou quit thy former love,[1]
Content to dwell for aye with me,
Thy scorn my finny frame might move,[2]
To[3] tear thy limbs amid the sea.'

LXII

'Then bear me swift along the main,
The lonely isle again to see,[4]
And, when I here return again,[5]
I plight my faith to dwell with thee.'

LXIII

An oozy film her limbs o'erspread,
While slow unfolds her scaly train,
With gluey fangs her hands were clad,
She lash'd, with webbèd fin, the main.

LXIV

He grasps the mermaid's scaly sides,
As, with broad fin, she oars her way;

[1] ['flame.'—M.] [2] ['Urged by disdain, my finny frame.'—M.] [3] ['Will.'—M.] [4] ['I long, the lonely Isle to see.'—M.] [5] ['And when thou bring'st me here again.'—M.]

Beneath the silent moon she glides,
That sweetly sleeps on Colonsay.

LXV

Proud swells her heart! she deems, at last,
To lure him with her silver tongue,[1]
And, as the shelving rocks she pass'd,
She raised her voice, and sweetly sung.

LXVI

In softer, sweeter strains she sung,
Slow gliding o'er[2] the moonlight bay,
When light to land the Chieftain sprung,
To hail the Maid of Colonsay.

LXVII

O sad the mermaid's gay notes fell,
And sadly sink,[3] remote at sea!
So sadly mourns the writhèd[4] shell
Of Jura's shore, its parent sea.

LXVIII

And ever as the year returns,
The charm-bound sailors know the day;[5]
For sadly still the mermaid mourns
The lovely[6] Chief of Colonsay.

[1] ['To charm him with her syren tongue.'—M.] [2] ['by.'—M.] [3] ['sunk.'—M.] [4] ['wreathed.'—M.] [5] [The couplet in M. reads:—

'And when the circling year returns,
The sailor knows the fated day.']

[6] ['warlike.'—M.]

NOTE

ON

THE MERMAID

The sea-snake heave his snowy mane.—St. xi. l. 4.

'They, who, in works of navigation, on the coasts of Norway, employ themselves in fishing or merchandise, do all agree in this strange story, that there is a serpent there, which is of a vast magnitude, namely, two hundred feet long, and, moreover, twenty feet thick; and is wont to live in rocks and caves, toward the sea-coast about Berge; which will go alone from his holes, in a clear night in summer, and devours calves, lambs, and hogs; or else he goes into the sea to feed on polypus, locusts, and all sorts of sea-crabs. He hath commonly hair hanging from his neck a cubit long, and sharp scales, and is black, and he hath flaming shining eyes. This snake disquiets the skippers, and he puts up his head on high, like a pillar, and catcheth away men, and he devours them; and this hapneth not but it signifies some wonderful change of the kingdom near at hand; namely, that the princes shall die, or be banished, or some tumultuous wars shall presentlie follow.'—*Olaus Magnus*, London, 1558, rendered into English by J. S. Much more of the sea-snake may be learned from the credible witnesses cited by Pontopiddan, who saw it raise itself from the sea, twice as high as the mast of their vessel. The tradition probably originates in the immense snake of the Edda, whose folds were supposed to girdle the earth.—J. L.

A sort of sea-snake, of size immense enough to have given rise to this tradition, was thrown ashore upon one of the Orkney Isles, in 1808.—W. S.

THE LORD HERRIES HIS COMPLAINT

A FRAGMENT

BY CHARLES KIRKPATRICK SHARPE, Esq.
OF HODDAM

Hoddam Castle is delightfully situated on the banks of the river Annan. It is an ancient structure, said to have been built betwixt the years 1437 and 1484, by John, Lord Herries of Herries, a powerful Border baron, who possessed extensive domains in Dumfriesshire. This family continued to flourish until the death of William, Lord Herries, in the sixteenth century, when it merged in heirs-female. Agnes, the eldest of the daughters of Lord William, was married to John, master of Maxwell, afterwards created Lord Herries, and a strenuous partisan of Queen Mary. The castle and barony of Hoddam were sold, about 1630, and were then, or soon afterwards, acquired by John Sharpe, Esq., in whose family they have ever since continued. Before the accession of James vi. to the English crown, Hoddam Castle was appointed to be kept 'with ane wise stout man, and to have with him four well-horsed men, and there to have two stark footmen, servants, to keep their horses, and the

principal to have ane stout footman.'—*Border Laws, Appendix.*

On the top of a small, but conspicuous hill, near to Hoddam Castle, there is a square tower, built of hewn stone, over the door of which are carved the figures of a dove and a serpent, and betwixt them the word *Repentance.* Hence the building, though its proper name is Trailtrow, is more frequently called the Tower of Repentance. It was anciently used as a beacon, and the Border laws direct a watch to be maintained there, with a fire-pan and bell, to give the alarm when the English crossed, or approached, the river Annan. This man was to have a husband-land for his service.—SPOTTISWOODE, p. 306.

Various accounts are given of the cause of erecting the Tower of Repentance. The following has been adopted by my ingenious correspondent, as most susceptible of poetical decoration. A certain Lord Herries—about the date of the transaction tradition is silent—was famous among those who used to rob and steal (*convey,* the wise it call). This lord, returning from England, with many prisoners, whom he had unlawfully enthralled, was overtaken by a storm, while passing the Solway Frith, and, in order to relieve his boat, he cut all their throats, and threw them into the sea. Feeling great qualms of conscience, he built this square tower, carving over the door, which is about halfway up the building, and had formerly no stairs to it, the figures above mentioned, of a dove and a serpent, emblems of remorse and grace, and the motto—'*Repentance.*'

I have only to add, that the marauding baron is said, from his rapacity, to have been sirnamed John

the Reif; probably in allusion to a popular romance; and that another account says, the sin, of which he repented, was the destruction of a church, or chapel, called Trailtrow, with the stones of which he had built the castle of Hoddam.—MACFARLANE'S *MSS.*

It is said, that Sir Richard Steele, while riding near this place, saw a shepherd boy reading his Bible, and asked him what he learned from it? 'The way to heaven,' answered the boy. 'And can you show it to me?' said Sir Richard, in banter. 'You must go by that tower,' replied the shepherd; and he pointed to the Tower of *Repentance.*

[Mr. George Neilson, in *Repentance Tower and its Tradition* (Edinburgh, 1890), broaches the theory that the tower was built by Sir John Maxwell, master of Maxwell (created Lord Herries in 1566), as a memorial of the Scottish hostages, his kinsmen, whom, in 1548, he sacrificed by joining his uncle, the Laird of Drumlanrig, against the English, on condition of obtaining the hand of Agnes Herries.]

THE LORD HERRIES HIS COMPLAINT

A FRAGMENT

I

Bright shone the moon on Hoddam's wall,
Bright on Repentance Tower;
Mirk was the Lord of Hoddam's saul,
The chief sae sad and sour.

II

He sat him on Repentance hicht,
And glowr'd upon the sea;
And sair and heavily he sicht,
But nae drap eased his bree.

III

'The night is fair, and calm the air,
No blasts disturb the tree;
Baith men and beast now take their rest,
And a''s at peace but me.

IV

'Can wealth and power in princely bower,
Can beauty's rolling ee,
Can friendship dear, wi' kindly tear,
Bring back my peace to me?

v

'No! lang lang maun the mourner pine,
And meikle penance dree,
Wha has a heavy heart like mine,
Ere light that heart can be.

vi

'Under yon silver skimmering waves,
That saftly rise and fa',
Lie mouldering banes in sandy graves,
They fley my peace awa'.

* * * * *

vii

'To help my boat, I pierced the throat
Of him whom ane lo'ed dear;
Nought did I spare his yellow hair,
And een sae bricht and clear.

viii

'She sits her lane, and maketh mane,
And sings a waefu' sang,—
"Scotch reivers hae my darling ta'en;
"O Willie tarries lang!"

ix

'I plunged an auld man in the sea,
Whase locks were like the snaw;
His hairs sall serve for rapes to me,
In hell my saul to draw.

X

'Soon did thy smile, sweet baby, stint,
Torn frae the nurse's knee,
That smile, that might hae saften'd flint,
And still'd the raging sea.

XI

'Alas! twelve precious lives were spilt,
My worthless spark to save;
Bet[1] had I fall'n, withouten guilt,
Frae cradle to the grave.

XII

'Repentance! signal of my bale,
Built of the lasting stane,
Ye lang shall tell the bluidy tale,
When I am dead and gane.

XIII

'How Hoddam's Lord, ye lang sall tell,
By conscience stricken sair,
In life sustain'd the pains of hell,
And perish'd in despair.'

* * * * *

[1] *Bet*, better.

THE

MURDER OF CAERLAVEROC

BY CHARLES KIRKPATRICK SHARPE, Esq.

The tragical event which preceded, or perhaps gave rise to, the successful insurrection of Robert Bruce, against the tyranny of Edward I., is well known. In the year 1304[6], Bruce abruptly left the Court of England, and held an interview, in the Dominical Church of Dumfries, with John, surnamed, from the colour of his hair, the Red Cuming, a powerful chieftain, who had formerly held the regency of Scotland. It is said, by the Scottish historians, that he upbraided Cuming with having betrayed to the English monarch a scheme, formed betwixt them, for asserting the independence of Scotland. The English writers maintain, that Bruce proposed such a plan to Cuming, which he rejected with scorn, as inconsistent with the fealty he had sworn to Edward. The dispute, however it began, soon waxed high betwixt two fierce and independent barons. At length, standing before the high altar of the church, Cuming gave Bruce the lie, and Bruce retaliated by a stroke of his poniard. Full of confusion and remorse, for a homicide committed in a sanctuary, the future monarch of Scotland rushed out of the church, with the bloody poniard in his hand. Kirkpatrick

and Lindsay, two barons who faithfully adhered to him, were waiting at the gate. To their earnest and anxious inquiries into the cause of his emotion, Bruce answered, 'I doubt I have slain the Red Cuming.'—'Doubtest thou?' exclaimed Kirkpatrick, 'I make sure!'[1] Accordingly, with Lindsay and a few followers, he rushed into the church, and despatched the wounded Cuming.

A homicide in such a place, and such an age, could hardly escape embellishment from the fertile genius of the churchmen, whose interest was so closely connected with the inviolability of a divine sanctuary. Accordingly, Bowmaker informs us, that the body of the slaughtered baron was watched, during the night, by the Dominicans, with the usual rites of the church. But, at midnight, the whole assistants fell into a dead sleep, with the exception of one aged father, who heard, with terror and surprise, a voice, like that of a wailing infant, exclaim, 'How long, O Lord, shall vengeance be deferred?' It was answered in an awful tone, 'Endure with patience, until the anniversary of this day shall return for the fifty-second time.' In the year 1357, fifty-two years after Cuming's death, James of Lindsay was hospitably feasted in the castle of Caerlaveroc, in Dumfriesshire, belonging to Roger Kirkpatrick. They were the sons of the murderers of the Regent. In the dead of night, for some unknown cause, Lindsay arose, and poniarded in his bed his unsuspecting host. He then mounted his horse to fly; but guilt and fear had so bewildered his senses, that, after riding all night, he was taken, at break of day, not

[1] Hence the crest of Kirkpatrick is a hand, grasping a dagger, distilling gouts of blood, proper; motto, '*I mack sicker.*'

three miles from the castle, and was afterwards executed by order of King David II.

The story of the murder is thus told by the Prior of Lochleven :—

'That ilk yhere in our kynryk
Hoge was slayne of Kilpatrik
Be schyr Jakkis the Lyndessay
In-til Karlaveroc ; and away
For til have bene with all his mycht
This Lyndyssay pressyt all a nycht
Forth on hors rycht fast rydand,
Nevyrtheless yhit thai him fand
Nocht thre myle fra that ilk place ;
There tane and broucht agane he was
Til Karlaveroc, be thai men
That frendis war till Kirkpatrik then ;
Thare was he kepyd rycht straytly.
His wyf[1] passyd till the King Dawy.
And prayid him of his realté,
Of Lauche that scho mycht serwyd be.
The Kyng Dawy than also fast
Till Dumfres with his curt he past,
At Lawche wald. Quhat was thare mare?
This Lyndessay to deth he gert do thare.'

WINTOUNIS *Cronykill*, b. viii. cap. 44.

[For various versions of the murder of the Red Comyn, and references to authorities, see Mr. Andrew Lang's *History of Scotland*, vol. i. pp. 202-4, 237-8.]

[1] That is, Kirkpatrick's wife.

THE

MURDER OF CAERLAVEROC

I

'Now, come to me, my little page,
Of wit sae wond'rous sly!
Ne'er under flower, o' youthfu' age,
Did mair destruction lie.

II

'I'll dance and revel wi' the rest,
Within this castle rare;
Yet he shall rue the drearie feast,
Bot and his lady fair.

III

'For ye maun drug Kirkpatrick's wine,
Wi' juice o' poppy flowers;
Nae mair he'll see the morning shine
Frae proud Caerlaveroc's towers.

IV

'For he has twin'd my love and me,
The maid of mickle scorn—
She'll welcome, wi' a tearfu' ee,
Her widowhood the morn.

V

'And saddle weel my milk-white steed,
Prepare my harness bright!
Giff I can mak my rival bleed,
I'll ride awa' this night.'

VI

'Now, haste ye, master, to the ha'!
The guests are drinking there;
Kirkpatrick's pride sall be but sma',
For a' his lady fair.'

* * * * *

VII

In came the merry minstrelsy;
Shrill harps wi' tinkling string,
And bagpipes, lilting melody,
Made proud Caerlaveroc ring.

VIII

There gallant knights, and ladies bright,
Did move to measures fine,
Like frolic fairies, jimp[1] and light,
Wha dance in pale moonshine.

IX

The ladies glided through the ha',
Wi' footing swift and sure—
Kirkpatrick's dame outdid them a',
Whan she stood on the floor.

[1] *Jimp*, slender.

X

And some had tyres of gold sae rare,
And pendants[1] eight or nine;
And she, wi' but her gowden hair,
Did a' the rest outshine.

XI

And some, wi' costly diamonds sheen,
Did warriors' hearts assail—
But she, wi' her twa sparkling een,
Pierc'd through the thickest mail.

XII

Kirkpatrick led her by the hand,
With gay and courteous air:
No stately castle in the land
Could show sae bright a pair.

XIII

O he was young—and clear the day
Of life to youth appears!
Alas! how soon his settling ray
Was dimm'd wi' show'ring tears!

XIV

Fell Lindsay sicken'd at the sight,
And sallow grew his cheek;
He tried wi' smiles to hide his spite,
But word he cou'dna speak.

[1] *Pendants*, jewels on the forehead.

XV

The gorgeous banquet was brought up,
On silver and on gold :
The page chose out a crystal cup,
The sleepy juice to hold.

XVI

And whan Kirkpatrick call'd for wine,
This page the drink would bear ;
Nor did the knight or dame divine
Sic black deceit was near.

XVII

Then every lady sung a sang ;
Some gay—some sad and sweet—
Like tunefu' birds the woods amang,
Till a' began to greet.[1]

XVIII

E'en cruel Lindsay shed a tear,
Forletting malice deep—
As mermaids, wi' their warbles clear,
Can sing the waves to sleep.

XIX

And now to bed they all are dight,
Now steek [2] they ilka [3] door :
There 's nought but stillness o' the night,
Whare was sic din [4] before.

[1] *Greet*, weep. [2] *Steek*, shut.] [3] [*Ilka*, every.] [4] [*Sic din*, such noise.]

XX

Fell Lindsay puts his harness on,
His steed doth ready stand;
And up the staircase is he gone,
Wi' poniard in his hand.

XXI

The sweat did on his forehead break,
He shook wi' guilty fear;
In air he heard a joyfu' shriek—
Red Cumin's ghaist was near.

XXII

Now to the chamber doth he creep—
A lamp, of glimmering ray,
Show'd young Kirkpatrick fast asleep,
In arms of lady gay.

XXIII

He lay wi' bare unguarded breast,
By sleepy juice beguil'd;
And sometimes sigh'd, by dreams opprest,
And sometimes sweetly smiled.

XXIV

Unclosed her mouth o' rosy hue,
Whence issued fragrant air,
That gently, in soft motion, blew
Stray ringlets o' her hair.

XXV

'Sleep on, sleep on, ye luvers dear!
The dame may wake to weep—
But that day's sun maun shine fu' clear,
That spills this warrior's sleep.'

XXVI

He louted[1] down—her lips he press'd—
O! kiss, foreboding woe!
Then struck on young Kirkpatrick's breast
A deep and deadly blow.

XXVII

Sair, sair, and meikle did he bleed:
His lady slept till day,
But dreamt the Firth[2] flow'd o'er her head,
In bride-bed as she lay.

XXVIII

The murderer hasted down the stair,
And back'd his courser fleet:
Then did the thunder 'gin to rair,
Then shower'd the rain and sleet.

XXIX

Ae fire-flaught darted through the rain,
Whare a' was mirk[3] before,
And glinted o'er the raging main,
That shook the sandy shore.

[1] [*Louted*, bent.] [2] Caerlaverock stands near Solway Firth.
[3] [*Mirk*, dark.]

XXX

But mirk and mirker grew the night,
And heavier beat the rain;
And quicker Lindsay urged his flight,
Some ha' or beild [1] to gain.

XXXI

Lang did he ride o'er hill and dale,
Nor mire nor flood he fear'd:
I trow his courage 'gan to fail
When morning light appear'd.

XXXII

For having hied, the live-lang night,
Through hail and heavy showers,
He fand himsel, at peep o' light,
Hard by Caerlaveroc's towers.

XXXIII

The castle bell was ringing out,
The ha' was all asteer;
And mony a scriech and waefu' shout
Appall'd the murderer's ear.

XXXIV

Now they hae bound this traitor strang,
Wi' curses and wi' blows,
And high in air they did him hang,
To feed the carrion crows.

* * * * *

[1] [*Ha' or beild*, home or shelter.]

XXXV

'To sweet Lincluden's[1] haly cells
Fou dowie I 'll repair;
There Peace wi' gentle Patience dwells,
Nae deadly feuds are there.

XXXVI

'In tears I 'll wither ilka charm,
Like draps o' balefu' yew;
And wail the beauty that cou'd harm
A knight, sae brave and true.'

[1] Lincluden Abbey is situated near Dumfries, on the banks of the river Cluden. It was founded and filled with Benedictine nuns, in the time of Malcolm IV., by Uthred, father to Roland, Lord of Galloway; these were expelled by Archibald the Grim, Earl of Douglas.—*Vide* PENNANT. [Besides expelling the nuns, Archibald the Grim converted the establishment into a collegiate church. The ruins include the 'roofless tower' of Burns's *Vision.*]

SIR AGILTHORN

BY M. G. LEWIS, Esq.

I

Oh! gentle huntsman, softly tread,
And softly wind thy bugle-horn;
Nor rudely break the silence shed
Around the grave of Agilthorn!

II

Oh! gentle huntsman, if a tear
E'er dimm'd for others' woe thine eyes,
Thou 'lt surely dew, with drops sincere,
The sod where Lady Eva lies.

III

Yon crumbling chapel's sainted bound
Their hands and hearts beheld them plight;
Long held yon towers, with ivy crown'd,
The beauteous dame and gallant knight.

IV

Alas! the hour of bliss is past,
For hark! the din of discord rings;

War's clarion sounds, Joy hears the blast,
And trembling plies his radiant wings.

v

And must sad Eva lose her lord?
And must he seek the martial plain?
Oh! see, she brings his casque and sword!
Oh! hark, she pours her plaintive strain!

vi

'Blest is the village damsel's fate,
Though poor and low her station be;
Safe from the cares which haunt the great,
Safe from the cares which torture me![1]

vii

'No doubting fear, no cruel pain,
No dread suspense her breast alarms;
No tyrant honour rules her swain,
And tears him from her folding arms.

viii

'She, careless wandering 'midst the rocks,
In pleasing toil consumes the day;
And tends her goats, or feeds her flocks,
Or joins her rustic lover's lay.

[1] ['Mr. Lewis's 'Sir Agilthorn' is a pleasing effusion, but can never be mistaken for an old ballad. His description of the happiness and contentment of a village damsel appears to have been borrowed from Guarini's *Pastor Fido.*'—*Monthly Review*, October 1804.—J. G. L.]

IX

'Though hard her couch, each sorrow flies
The pillow which supports her head;
She sleeps, nor fears at morn her eyes
Shall wake, to mourn an husband dead.

X

'Hush, impious fears! the good and brave
Heaven's arm will guard from danger free;
When death with thousands gluts the grave,
His dart, my love, shall glance from thee:

XI

'While thine shall fly direct and sure,
This buckler every blow repel;
This casque from wounds that face secure,
Where all the loves and graces dwell.

XII

'This glittering scarf, with tenderest care,
My hands in happier moments wove;
Curst be the wretch, whose sword shall tear
The spell-bound work of wedded love!

XIII

'Lo! on thy falchion, keen and bright,
I shed a trembling consort's tears;
Oh! when their traces meet thy sight,
Remember wretched Eva's fears!

XIV

'Think, how thy lips she fondly prest;
Think, how she wept, compell'd to part;
Think, every wound, which scars thy breast,
Is doubly marked on Eva's heart!'

XV

'O thou! my mistress, wife, and friend!'—
Thus Agilthorn with sighs began;
'Thy fond complaints my bosom rend,
Thy tears my fainting soul unman:

XVI

'In pity cease, my gentle dame,
Such sweetness and such grief to join!
Lest I forget the voice of Fame,
And only list to Love's and thine.

XVII

'Flow, flow, my tears, unbounded gush!
Rise, rise, my sobs! I set ye free;
Bleed, bleed, my heart! I need not blush
To own, that life is dear to me.

XVIII

'The wretch, whose lips have press'd the bowl,
The bitter bowl of pain and woe,
May careless reach his mortal goal,
May boldly meet the final blow:

XIX

'His hopes destroy'd, his comfort wreck'd,
An happier life he hopes to find;
But what can I in heaven expect,
Beyond the bliss I leave behind?

XX

'Oh, no! the joys of yonder skies
To prosperous love present no charms;
My heaven is placed in Eva's eyes,
My paradise in Eva's arms.

XXI

'Yet mark me, sweet! if Heaven's command
Hath doom'd my fall in martial strife,
Oh! let not anguish tempt thy hand
To rashly break the thread of life!

XXII

'No! let our boy thy care engross,
Let him thy stay, thy comfort, be;
Supply his luckless father's loss,
And love him for thyself and me.

XXIII

'So may oblivion soon efface
The grief, which clouds this fatal morn;
And soon thy cheeks afford no trace
Of tears, which fall for Agilthorn!'

XXIV

He said, and couch'd his quivering lance,
He said, and braced his moony shield;
Seal'd a last kiss, threw a last glance,
Then spurr'd his steed to Flodden Field.

XXV

But Eva, of all joy bereft,
Stood rooted at the castle gate,
And view'd the prints his courser left,
While hurrying at the call of fate.

XXVI

Foreboding sad her bosom told,
The steed, which bore him thence so light,
Her longing eyes would ne'er behold
Again bring home her own true knight.

XXVII

While many a sigh her bosom heaves,
She thus address'd her orphan page:—
'Dear youth, if e'er my love relieved
The sorrows of thy infant age;

XXVIII

'If e'er I taught thy locks to play,
Luxuriant, round thy blooming face;
If e'er I wiped thy tears away,
And bade them yield to smiles their place;

XXIX

'Oh! speed thee, swift as steed can bear,
Where Flodden groans with heaps of dead,
And, o'er the combat, home repair,
And tell me how my lord has sped.

XXX

'Till thou return'st, each hour 's an age.
An age employ'd in doubt and pain;
Oh! haste thee, haste, my little foot-page,
Oh! haste, and soon return again!'

XXXI

'Now, lady dear, thy grief assuage!
Good tidings soon shall ease thy pain:
I'll haste, I'll haste, thy little foot-page,
I'll haste, and soon return again.'

XXXII

Then Oswy bade his courser fly;
But still, while hapless Eva wept,
Time scarcely seem'd his wings to ply,
So slow the tedious moments crept.

XXXIII

And oft she kiss'd her baby's cheek,
Who slumber'd on her throbbing breast,
And now she bade the warder speak,
And now she lull'd her child to rest.

XXXIV

'Good warder, say, what meets thy sight?
What see'st thou from the castle tower?'
'Nought but the rocks of Elginbright,
Nought but the shades of Forest-Bower.'

XXXV

'Oh! pretty babe! thy mother's joy,
Pledge of the purest, fondest flame,
To-morrow's sun, dear helpless boy!
Must see thee bear an orphan's name.

XXXVI

'Perhaps, e'en now, some Scottish sword
The life-blood of thy father drains;
Perhaps, e'en now, that heart is gored,
Whose streams supplied thy little veins.

XXXVII

'O! warder, from the castle tower,
Now say, what objects meet thy sight?'
'None but the shades of Forest-Bower,
None but the rocks of Elginbright.'

XXXVIII

'Smil'st thou, my babe? so smiled thy sire,
When gazing on his Eva's face;
His eyes shot beams of gentle fire,
And joy'd such beams in mine to trace.

XXXIX

'Sleep, sleep, my babe! of care devoid:
Thy mother breathes this fervent vow—
Oh! never be thy soul employ'd
On thoughts so sad as hers are now!

XL

'Now, warder, warder, speak again!
What see'st thou from the turret's height?'
'Oh! lady, speeding o'er the plain,
The little foot-page appears in sight.'

XLI

Quick beat her heart; short grew her breath;
Close to her breast the babe she drew—
'Now, Heaven,' she cried, 'for life or death!'
And forth to meet the page she flew.

XLII

'And is thy lord from danger free?
And is the deadly combat o'er?'
In silence Oswy bent his knee,
And laid a scarf her feet before.

XLIII

The well-known scarf with blood was stained,
And tears from Oswy's eyelids fell;
Too truly Eva's heart explained,
What meant those silent tears to tell.

XLIV

'Come, come, my babe!' she wildly cried,
'We needs must seek the field of woe;
Come, come, my babe! cast fear aside!
To dig thy father's grave we go.'

XLV

'Stay, lady, stay! a storm impends;
Lo! threatening clouds the sky o'erspread;
The thunder roars, the rain descends,
And lightning streaks the heavens with red.

XLVI

'Hark! hark! the winds tempestuous rave!
Oh! be thy dread intent resign'd!
Or, if resolved the storm to brave,
Be this dear infant left behind!'

XLVII

'No! no! with me my baby stays;
With me he lives; with me he dies!
Flash, lightnings, flash! your friendly blaze
Will show me where my warrior lies.'

XLVIII

O see she roams the bloody field,
And wildly shrieks her husband's name;
O see she stops and eyes a shield,
A heart the symbol, wrapt in flame.

XLIX

His armour broke in many a place,
A knight lay stretch'd that shield beside;
She raised his vizor, kiss'd his face,
Then on his bosom sunk, and died.——

L

Huntsman, their rustic grave behold:
'Tis here, at night, the Fairy king,
Where sleeps the fair, where sleeps the bold,
Oft forms his light fantastic ring.

LI

'Tis here, at eve, each village youth
With freshest flowers the turf adorns;
'Tis here he swears eternal truth,
By Eva's faith and Agilthorn's.

LII

And here the virgins sadly tell,
Each seated by her shepherd's side,
How brave the gallant warrior fell,
How true his lovely lady died.

LIII

Ah! gentle Huntsman, pitying hear,
And mourn the gentle lover's doom!
Oh! gentle huntsman, drop a tear,
And dew the turf of Eva's tomb!

LIV

So ne'er may fate thy hopes oppose ;
So ne'er may grief to thee be known :
They who can weep for others' woes,
Should ne'er have cause to weep their own.

RICH AULD WILLIE'S FAREWELL

A FREEBOOTER, TAKEN BY THE ENGLISH IN A BORDER BATTLE, AND CONDEMNED TO BE EXECUTED

BY ANNA SEWARD

I

Farewell, my ingle,[1] bleezing bright,
When the snell storm 's begun;
My bouris casements, O! sae light!
When glints[2] the bonnie sun!

II

Farewell, my deep glens, speck't wi' sloes,
O' tangled hazles full!
Farewell, my thymy lea, where lows
My kine, and glourin[3] bull.

III

Farewell, my red-deer, jutting proud,
My rooks o' murky wing!

[1] [*Ingle*, fireside.] [2] [*Glints*, gleams.] [3] [*Glourin*, staring.]

Farewell, my wee birds, lilting loud,
A' in the merry spring!

IV

Farewell, my sheep, that sprattle on
In a lang line, sae braw;[1]
Or lie on yon cauld cliffs aboon,
Like late-left patch o' snaw!

V

Farewell, my brook, that wimplin[2] rins,
My clattering brig o' yew;
My scaly tribes wi' gowden fins,
Sae nimbly flickering through!

VI

Farewell, my boat, and lusty oars,
That scelp'd, wi mickle spray!
Farewell, my birks o' Teviot shores,
That cool the simmer's day!

VII

Farewell, bauld neighbours, whase swift steed
O'er Saxon bounds has scowr'd,
Swoom'd drumlie[3] floods when moons were dead,
And ilka[4] star was smoor'd.[5]

[1] [*Braw*, fine.] [2] [*Wimplin*, meandering.] [3] [*Drumlie*, discoloured.] [4] [*Ilka*, every.] [5] [*Smoor'd*, smothered, concealed.]

VIII

Maist dear for a' ye shar'd wi' me,
When skaith and prey did goad,
And danger, like a wraith, did flee
Alang our moon-dead road.

IX

Farewell, my winsome wife, sae gay!
Fu' fain frae hame to gang,
Wi' spunkie[1] lads to geck and play,
The flowrie haughs[2] amang!

X

Farewell, my gowk,[3] thy warning note
Then aft-times ca'd aloud,
Tho' o' the word that thrill'd thy throat,
Gude faith, I was na proud!

XI

And, pawky gowk, sae free that mad'st,
Or ere I hangèd be,
Would I might learn if true thou said'st,
When sae thou said'st to me!

[1] [*Spunkie*, spirited.] [2] [*Haughs*, low-lying lands.] [3] [*Gowk*, cuckoo.]

WATER-KELPIE

NEVER BEFORE PUBLISHED

Rev. Dr. JAMIESON

The principal design of the author of this piece was to give a specimen of Scottish writing, more nearly approaching to the classical compositions of our ancient bards, than that which has been generally followed for seventy or eighty years past. As the poem is descriptive of the superstitions of the vulgar, in the county of Angus, the scene is laid on the banks of South Esk, near the castle of Inverquharity, about five miles north from Forfar.

It is with pleasure that the Editor announces to the literary world, that Dr. Jamieson is about to publish a complete Dictionary of the Scottish Dialect;[1] his intimate acquaintance with which is evinced in the following stanzas.

[1] The work, here referred to, has since been published, and forms an invaluable digest of Scottish language and learning.

[It appeared in 1808 in two volumes, and two supplementary volumes were published in 1825. The work was reissued with additions in 1840; and a revised edition by Donaldson and Longmuir appeared 1879-87. Though of remarkable excellence for the period when it was written, it cannot be regarded, even in its revised form, as quite satisfactory, no adequate dictionary, either of the language of the older Scottish literature or of Scottish provincialisms, having yet been achieved.]

WATER-KELPIE

I

Aft, owre the bent, with heather blent,
And throw the forest brown,
I tread the path to yon green strath,
Quhare brae-born Esk rins down.
Its banks alang, quhilk hazels thrang,
Quhare sweet-sair'd hawthorns blow,
I lufe to stray, and view the play
Of fleckit scules below.

II

Ae summer e'en, upon the green,
I laid me down to gaze;
The place right nigh, quhare Carity
His humble tribute pays:
And Prosen proud, with rippet loud,
Cums ravin' frae his glen;
As gin he micht auld Esk affricht,
And drive him back agen.

III

An ancient tour appear't to lour
Athort the neibourin plain,
Quhais chieftain bauld, in times of auld,
The kintrie call't his ain.

Its honours cow't, it 's now forhow't,
And left the houlat's prey;
Its skuggin' wude, aboon the flude,
With gloom owrespreads the day.

IV

A dreary shade the castle spread,
And mirker grew the lift;
The croonin' kie the byre drew nigh,
The darger left his thrift.
The lavrock shill on erd was still,
The westlin wind fell loun;
The fisher's houp forgat to loup,
And aw for rest made boun.

V

I seem't to sloom, quhan throw the gloom
I saw the river shak,
And heard a whush alangis it rush,
Gart aw my members quak;
Syne, in a stound, the pool profound
To cleave in twain appear'd;
And huly throw the frichtsom how
His form a gaist uprear'd.

VI

He rashes bare, and seggs, for hair,
Quhare ramper-eels entwin'd;
Of filthy gar his ee-brees war,
With esks and horse-gells lin'd.

And for his een, with dowie sheen,
Twa huge horse-mussels glar'd:
From his wide mow a torrent flew,
And soupt his reedy beard.

VII

Twa slauky stanes seemit his spule-banes;
His briskit braid, a whin;
Ilk rib sae bare, a skelvy skair;
Ilk arm a monstrous fin.
He frae the wame a fish became,
With shells aw coverit owre:
And for his tail, the grislie whale
Could nevir match its pow'r.

VIII

With dreddour I, quhan he drew nigh,
Had maistly swarfit outricht:
Less fleyit, at lenth I gatherit strenth,
And speirit quhat was this wicht.
Syne thrice he shook his fearsum bouk,
And thrice he snockerit loud;
From ilka ee the fire-flauchts flee,
And flash alangis the flude.

IX

Quhan words he found, their elritch sound
Was like the norlan blast,
Frae yon deep glack, at Catla's back,
That skeegs the dark-brown waste.

The troublit pool conveyit the gowl
Down to yon echoin rock;
And to his maik, with wilsum skraik,
Ilk bird its terror spoke.

X

The trout, the par, now here, now thare,
As in a widdrim bang;
The gerron gend gaif sic a stend,
As on the yird him flang:
And down the stream, like levin's gleam,
The fleggit salmond flew;
The ottar yap his prey let drap,
And to his hiddils drew.

XI

'Vile droich,' he said, 'art nocht afraid
Thy mortal life to tyne?
How dar'st thou seik with me till speik,
Sae far aboon thy line?
Yet sen thou hast thai limits past,
That sinder sprites frae men,
Thy life I'll spare, and aw declare,
That worms like thee may ken.

XII

'In kintries nar, and distant far,
Is my renoun propall't;
As is the leid, my name ye'll reid,
But here I'm *Kelpie* call't.

The strypes and burns, throw aw their turns
As weel's the waters wide,
My laws obey, thair spring-heads frae,
Doun till the salt sea tide.

XIII

'Like some wild staig, I aft stravaig,
And scamper on the wave:
Quha with a bit my mow can fit,
May gar me be his slave.
To him I'll wirk, baith morn and mirk,
Quhile he has wark to do;
Gin tent he tak I do nae shak
His bridle frae my mow.

XIV

'Quhan Murphy's laird his biggin rear'd,
I carryit aw the stanes;
And mony a chiell has heard me squeal
For sair-brizz'd back and banes.
Within flude-mark, I aft do wark
Gudewillit, quhan I please;
In quarries deep, quhile uthers sleep,
Greit blocks I win with ease.

XV

'Yon bonny brig quhan folk wald big,
To gar my stream look braw;
A sair-toil'd wicht was I be nicht;
I did mair than thaim aw.

And weel thai kent quhat help I lent,
For thai yon image fram't,
Aboon the pend quhilk I defend;
And it thai *Kelpie* nam't.

XVI

'Quhan lads and lasses wauk the clais,
Narby yon whinny hicht,
The sound of me their daffin lays;
Thai dare na mudge for fricht.
Now in the midst of them I scream,
Quhan toozlin' on the haugh;
Than quhihher by thaim doun the stream,
Loud nickerin in a lauch.

XVII

'Sicklike 's my fun, of wark quhan run:
But I do meikle mair;
In pool or ford can nane be smur'd
Gin Kelpie be nae there.
Fow lang, I wat, I ken the spat,
Quhair ane sall meet his deid:
Nor wit nor pow'r put aff the hour,
For his wanweird decreed.

XVIII

'For oulks befoir, alangis the shoir,
Or dancin' down the stream,
My lichts are seen to blaze at e'en,
With wull wanerthly gleam.

The hind cums in, gif haim he win,
And cries, as he war wod—
"Sum ane sall soon be carryit down
By that wanchancy flude!"

XIX

'The taiken leil thai ken fow weel,
On water-sides quha won;
And aw but thai, quha's weird I spae,
Fast frae the danger run.
But fremmit fouk I thus provoke
To meit the fate thai flee:
To wilderit wichts thai're waefow lichts,
But lichts of joy to me.

XX

'With ruefow cries, that rend the skies,
Thair fate I seem to mourn,
Like crocodile, on banks of Nile;
For I still do the turn.
Douce, cautious men aft fey are seen;
Thai rin as thai war heyrt,
Despise all rede, and court their dede:
By me are thai inspir't.

XXI

'Yestreen the water was in spate.
The stanners aw war cur'd,
A man, nae stranger to the gate,
Raid up to tak the ford.

The haill town sware it wadna ride;
And Kelpie had been heard:
But nae a gliffin wad he bide,
His shroud I had prepar'd.

XXII

'The human schaip I sometimes aip:
As Prosenhaugh raid haim,
Ae starnless nicht, he gat a fricht,
Maist crackt his bustuous frame.
I, in a glint, lap on ahint,
And in my arms him fang't;
To his dore-cheik I kept the cleik:
The carle was sair bemang't.

XXIII

'My name itsell wirks like a spell,
And quiet the house can keep;
Quhan greits the wean, the nurse in vain,
Thoch tyke-tyrit, tries to sleep.
But gin scho say, "Lie still, ye skrae,
There's Water-Kelpie's chap";
It's fleyit to wink, and in a blink
It sleeps as sound 's a tap.'

XXIV

He said, and thrice he rais't his voice,
And gaif a horrid gowl:
Thrice with his tail, as with a flail,
He struck the flying pool.

A thunderclap seem't ilka wap,
  Resoundin' throw the wude:
The fire thrice flash't; syne in he plash't,
  And sunk beneath the flude.

NOTES

ON

THE WATER-KELPIE

The fisher's houp forgat to loup.—St. iv. l. 7.

The fishes, the hope of the angler, no more rose to the fly.

And aw for rest made boun.—St. iv. l. 8.

All commonly occurs in our old writers. But *aw* is here used, as corresponding with the general pronunciation in Scotland; especially as it has the authority of Dunbar, in his *Lament for the Deth of the Makaris.* [Dunbar introduces 'aw' to rhyme with 'Schaw'. In other stanzas he has 'all'.]

His form a gaist uprear'd.—St. v. l. 8.

It is believed in Angus, that the Spirit of the Waters appears sometimes as a man, with a very frightful aspect; and, at other times, as a horse. The description, here given, must therefore be viewed as the offspring of fancy. All that can be said for it is, that such attributes are selected as are appropriate to the scenery.

Twa huge horse-mussels glar'd.—St. vi. l. 6.

South-Esk abounds with the fresh-water oyster, vulgarly called the *horse-mussel*; and, in former times, a pearl-fishery was carried on here to a considerable extent.

Frae yon deep glack, at Catla's back.—St. ix. l. 3.

Part of the Grampian mountains. *Catla* appears as a promontory, jutting out from the principal ridge towards the plain. The Esk, if I recollect right, issues from behind it.

Thy mortal life to tyne?—St. xi. l. 2.

The vulgar idea is, that a spirit, however frequently it appear, will not speak, unless previously addressed. It is, however, at the same time believed, that the person, who ventures to speak to a ghost, forfeits his life, and will soon lose it, in consequence of his presumption.

His bridle frae my mow.—St. xiii. l. 8.

The popular tradition is here faithfully described; and, strange to tell! has not yet lost all credit. In the following verses, the principal articles of the vulgar creed in Angus, with respect to this supposed being, are brought together, and illustrated by such *facts* as are yet appealed to by the credulous. If I mistake not, none of the historical circumstances mentioned are older than half a century. It is only about thirty years since the bridge referred to was built.

For sair-brizz'd back and banes.—St. xiv. l. 4.

It is pretended that *Kelpie* celebrated this memorable event in rhyme; and that for a long time after he was often heard to cry, with a doleful voice,

'Sair back and sair banes,
Carryin' the Laird of Murphy's stanes!'

And it thai Kelpie nam't.—St. xv. l. 8.

A head, like that of a gorgon, appears above the arch of the bridge. This was hewn in honour of Kelpie.

His shroud I had prepar'd.—St. xxi. l. 8.

A very common tale in Scotland is here alluded to by the poet. On the banks of a rapid stream the Water-

Spirit was heard repeatedly to exclaim, in a dismal tone, 'The hour is come, but not the man'; when a person coming up, contrary to all remonstrances, endeavoured to ford the stream, and perished in the attempt. The original story is to be found in Gervase of Tilbury.—In the parish of Castleton, the same story is told, with this variation, that the bystanders prevented, by force, the predestined individual from entering the river, and shut him up in the church, where he was next morning found suffocated, with his face lying immersed in the baptismal font. To a *fey* person, therefore, Shakespeare's words literally apply:—

> —'Put a little water in a spoon,
> And it shall be as all the ocean,
> Enough to swallow such a being up.'

N.B.—The last note is added by the Editor [*i.e.* Sir Walter Scott].

[The same story is found in Wales. See specially Rhys' *Celtic Folklore*, i. 243-244. See also further about water-kelpies in Mackinlay's *Folklore of Scottish Lochs and Streams*, and 'Traces of River-worship in Scottish Folklore,' in *Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland*, 1895, pp. 69-76.]

GLOSSARY

OF

THE WORDS REQUIRING EXPLANATION IN THE FOREGOING POEM

Aboon, above.
Ahint, behind.
Aip, ape, imitate.
Alangis, alongst.

Bang, rush, run with impetuosity.
Bemang't, injured, whether in mind or body; a word much used in Angus.
Be, by.
Big, build.
Biggin, building, house.
Blink, moment.
Bonny, handsome, beautiful.
Bouk, body.
Boun, ready.
Braw, fine.
Briskeit, breast.
Bustuous, huge.
Byre, cow-house.

Chap, rap.
Chiell, fellow.
Cleik, hold.
Cow't, shorn, cut off.
Croonin, bellowing—most properly with a low and mournful sound.
Cur'd, covered.

Darger, labourer, day-worker.
Daffin, sport.
Dede, death.
Do the turn, accomplish the fatal event.
Dore-cheik, door-post.
Dowie, melancholy, sad.
Douce, sober, sedate.
Drap, drop.
Dreddour, dread, terror.
Droich, dwarf, pigmy.

Een, eyes.
Eebrees, eyebrows.
Elritch, wild, hideous, not earthly.
Erd, earth.

Esks, newts, *or* efts.

Fey, affording presages of approaching death, by acting a part directly the reverse of their proper character.
Fire-flaughts, lightnings.
Fleckit scules, spotted shoals, or troops of trouts and other fishes.
Fleggit, affrighted.
Fleyd, frighted.
Forhow't, forsaken.
Fou, full.
Fangit, seized.
Fleyit, affrighted.
Frightsum, frightful.
Fremmit foulk, strange folk.

Gaist, ghost.
Gaif, gave.
Gart, caused, made.
Gar, the slimy vegetable substance in the bed of a river.
Gate, road.
Gerron, a sea-trout.
Glack, a hollow between two hills or mountains.
Gliffin, a moment.
Glint, moment.
Gowl, yell.
Greits, cries, implying the idea of tears.
Gudewillit, without constraint, cheerfully.

Haill, whole.
Haugh, low, flat ground on the side of a river.
Heyrt, furious.
Hiddils, hiding-place.
Howlat, owl.
Horse-gells, horse-leeches.
Huly, slowly.

Ilk, each.
In a stound, suddenly.

Ken, know.
Kie, cows.
Kintrie, country.

Lavrock, lark.
Lauch, laugh.
Leid, language.
Leil, true, not delusive.
Levin, lightning.
Lift, sky.
Loun, calm.
Loup, leap.

Maik, companion, mate.
Mirk, during night.
Mirker, darker.
Mow, mouth.
Mudge, budge, stir.

Nar, near.
Narby, near to.
Nickerin, neighing.
Nocht, nought.
Norlan, northern.

Oulks, weeks.

Par, the samlet.

Pend, arch.
Pray, Prey.

Quhihher, the idea is nearly expressed by *whiz.*
Quhilk, which.

Ramper-eels, lampreys.
Rashes, rushes.
Rede, counsel.
Reid, read.
Rippet, noise, uproar.

Sair-brizz'd, sore-bruised.
Sall, shall.
Sen, since.
Seggs, sedges.
Sheen, shine.
Shill, shrill.
Sicklike, of this kind.
Sinder, separate.
Skelvyskair, a rock presenting the appearance of a variety of *lamina.*
Skeegs, lashes.
Skrae, skeleton.
Skuggin, overshadowing protecting wood.
Sloom, slumber.
Slauky, slimy.
Smur'd, smothered.
Snockerit, snorted.
Soupt, drenched.
Spae, predict.
Spat, spot.
Spate, flood.
Speirit, asked.
Spule-banes, shoulder-blades.
Stanners, gravel on the margin of a river, or of any body of water.
Staig, a young horse.
Starnless, without stars.
Stravaig, stray, roam.
Strypes, rills of the smallest kind.
Swarfit, fainted.
Sweet-sair'd, sweet-savoured.
Syne, then.

Taiken, token.
Tap, a child's top.
Tent, take care, be attentive.
Thai, these.
Than, then.
Thare, there.
Toozlin, toying, properly putting any thing in disorder.
Tyke-tyrit, tired as a dog after coursing.
Tyne, lose.

Waefou, fatal, causing woe.
Wald, would.
Wanweird, unhappy fate.
Wanchancy, unlucky, causing misfortune.
Wanerthly, preternatural.
Wap, stroke, flap.
War, were.
Wauk the claes, watch the clothes.
Wean, child.
Weird, fate.

Whush, a rustling sound.
Widdrim, state of confusion.
Wilsum skraik, wild shriek.
Wirk, work.
Wod, deprived of reason.
Win, dig from a quarry.
Wull, wild.
Yap, keen, voracious.
Yestreen, yesternight.
Yird, earth, ground.

ELLANDONAN CASTLE

A HIGHLAND TALE

BY COLIN MACKENZIE, Esq.[1]

Ellandonan Castle stands on a small rocky isle, situated in Loch Duich (on the west coast of Ross), near the point where the Western Sea divides itself into two branches, forming Loch Duich and Loch Loung. The magnificence of the castle itself, now a roofless ruin, covered with ivy, the beauty of the bay, and the variety of hills and valleys that surround it, and particularly the fine range of hills, between which lie the pastures of Glensheal, with the lofty summit of Skooroora, overtopping the rest, and forming a grand background to the picture, all contribute to make this a piece of very romantic Highland scenery.[2]

The castle is the manor-place of the estate of Kintail, which is denominated the barony of Ellandonan. That estate is the property of Francis, Lord Seaforth. It has descended to him through a long line of gallant ancestors; having been originally conferred on Colin Fitzgerald, son to the

[1] [Colin Mackenzie, Esq. of Portmore, one of the Principal Clerks of Session at Edinburgh, and through life an intimate friend of Sir Walter Scott, died on 16th September 1830.—J. G. L.] [See various particulars in Lockhart's *Life of Scott*.]

[2] We learn from Wintoun, that, in 1331, this fortress witnessed the severe justice of Randolph, Earl of Murray, then Warden of Scotland. Fifty delinquents were there executed, by his orders, and, according to the Prior of Lochleven, the Earl had as much pleasure in seeing their ghastly heads encircle the walls of the castle, as if it had been surrounded by a chaplet of roses.

Earl of Desmond and Kildare, in the kingdom of Ireland, by a charter, dated 9th January 1266, granted by King Alexander the Third, '*Colino Hybernio,*' and bearing, as its inductive cause, '*pro bono et fideli servitio, tam in bello, quam in pace.*' He had performed a very recent service in war, having greatly distinguished himself in the battle of Largs, in 1263, in which the invading army of Haco, King of Norway, was defeated. Being pursued in his flight, the King was overtaken in the narrow passage which divides the island of Skye from the coasts of Inverness and Ross, and, along with many of his followers, he himself was killed, in attempting his escape through the channel dividing Skye from Lochalsh. These straits, or *kyles,* bear to this day appellations, commemorating the events by which they were thus distinguished, the former being called Kyle Rhee, or the King's Kyle, and the latter Kyle Haken.

The attack on Ellandonan Castle, which forms the subject of the following poem, lives in the tradition of the country, where it is, at this day, a familiar tale, repeated to every stranger, who, in sailing past, is struck with admiration at the sight of that venerable monument of antiquity. But the authenticity of the fact rests not solely on tradition. It is recorded by Crawford, in his account of the family of Macdonald, Lord of the Isles, and reference is there made to a genealogy of Slate, in the possession of the family, as a warrant for the assertion. The incident took place in 1537.

The power of the Lord of the Isles was at that time sufficiently great to give alarm to the Crown. It covered not only the whole of the Western Isles, from Bute northwards, but also many extensive

districts on the mainland, in the shires of Ayr, Argyle, and Inverness. Accordingly, in 1535, on the failure of heirs-male of the body of John, Lord of the Isles, and Earl of Ross, as well as of his natural sons, in whose favour a particular substitution had been made, King James the Fifth assumed the lordship of the Isles. The right was, however, claimed by Donald, fifth baron of Slate, descended from the immediate younger brother of John, Lord of the Isles. This bold and high-spirited chieftain lost his life in the attack on Ellandonan Castle, and was buried by his followers on the lands of Ardelve, on the opposite side of Loch Loung.

The barony of Ellandonan then belonged to John Mackenzie, ninth Baron of Kintail. Kenneth, third Baron, who was son to Kenneth, the son of Colin Fitzgerald, received the patronymic appellation of *Mac* Kenneth, or Mac Kennye, which descended from him to his posterity, as the sirname of the family. John, Baron of Kintail, took a very active part in the general affairs of the kingdom. He fought gallantly at the battle of Flodden, under the banners of King James the Fourth; was a member of the Privy Council in the reign of his son, and, at an advanced age, supported the standard of the unfortunate Mary, at the battle of Pinkie.

In the sixth generation from John, Baron of Kintail, the clan was, by his lineal descendant, William, fifth Earl of Seaforth, summoned, in 1715, to take up arms in the cause of the house of Stuart. On the failure of that spirited, but ill-fated enterprise, the Earl made his escape to the Continent, where he lived for about eleven years. Meantime his estate and honours were forfeited to the Crown, and his castle was burnt. A steward was appointed

to levy the rents of Kintail, on the King's behalf; but the vassals spurned at his demands, and, while they carried on a successful defensive war, against a body of troops sent to subdue their obstinacy, in the course of which the unlucky steward had the misfortune to be slain, one of their number made a faithful collection of what was due, and carried the money to the Earl himself, who was at that time in Spain. The descendants of the man, to whom it was entrusted to convey to his Lord this unequivocal proof of the honour, fidelity, and attachment of his people, are at this day distinguished by the designation of *Spaniard*; as Duncan *the Spaniard*, etc. The estate was, a few years after the forfeiture, purchased from Government, for behoof of the family, and reinvested in the person of his son.

[Some of the foregoing statements require elucidation. John, the last Lord of the Isles, died as early as 1498. One of his two illegitimate sons died in 1478, and the eldest, Angus, was assassinated in 1485, leaving a son, Donald Dubh, who claimed the lordship of the Isles. He was taken prisoner in 1505, but escaping in 1543, held possession of the lordship for two years, when he passed over to Ireland. During Dubh's imprisonment the lordship was claimed by Sir Donald Macdonald of Lochalsh, grand-nephew of John, the last lord. It was some time after Sir Donald's death that, in 1539, Donald Gorme of Sleat claimed the lordship.

The fifth Earl of Seaforth joined the expedition of 1719, and was wounded at the battle of Glenshiels. He came to terms with the Government in 1726, and though his forfeiture was not reversed, he was discharged of the penal consequences of his attainder.]

ELLANDONAN CASTLE

A HIGHLAND TALE

I

O wot ye, ye men of the island of Skye,
That your Lord lies a corpse on Ardelve's rocky shore?
The Lord of the Isles, once so proud and so high,
His lands and his vassals shall never see more.

II

None else but the Lord of Kintail was so great;
To that Lord the green banks of Loch Duich belong,
Ellandonan's fair castle and noble estate,
And the hills of Glensheal and the coasts of Loch Loung.

III

His vassals are many, and trusty, and brave,
Descended from heroes, and worthy their sires;
His castle is wash'd by the salt-water wave,
And his bosom the ardour of valour inspires.

IV

M'Donald, by restless ambition impell'd
To extend to the shores of Loch Duich his sway,
With awe Ellandonan's strong turrets beheld,
And waited occasion to make them his prey.

V

And the moment was come; for M'Kenneth, afar,
To the Saxon opposed his victorious arm;
Few and old were the vassals, but dauntless in war,
Whose courage and skill freed his towers from alarm.

VI

M'Donald has chosen the best of his power;
On the green plains of Slate were his warriors array'd;
Every islander came before midnight an hour,
With the sword in his hand, and the belt on his plaid.

VII

The boats they are ready, in number a score;
In each boat twenty men, for the war of Kintail;
Iron hooks they all carry, to grapple the shore,
And ladders, the walls of the fortress to scale.

VIII

They have pass'd the strait kyle, thro' whose billowy flood,
From the arms of Kintail-men, fled Haco of yore,
Whose waves were dyed deep with Norwegian blood,
Which was shed by M'Kenneth's resistless claymore.

IX

They have enter'd Loch Duich—all silent their course,
Save the splash of the oar on the dark-bosom'd wave,
Which mingled with murmurs, low, hollow, and hoarse,
That issued from many a coralline cave.

X

Either coast they avoid, and right eastward they steer;
Nor star, nor the moon, on their passage has shone;
Unexpecting assault, and unconscious of fear,
All Kintail was asleep, save the watchman alone.

XI

'What, ho! my companions! arise, and behold
Where Duich's deep waters with flashes are bright!
Hark! the sound of the oars; rise, my friends, and be bold!
For some foe comes, perhaps, under shadow of night.'

XII

At the first of the dawn, when the boats reach'd the shore,
The sharp ridge of Skooroora with dark mist was crown'd,
And the rays, that broke thro' it, seem'd spotted with gore,
As M'Donald's bold currach first struck on the ground.

XIII

Of all the assailants that sprung on the coast,
One of stature and aspect superior was seen;
Whatever a lord or a chieftain could boast,
Of valour undaunted, appear'd in his mien.

XIV

His plaid o'er his shoulder was gracefully flung;
Its foldings a buckle of silver restrain'd;

A massy broadsword on his manly thigh hung,
Which defeat or disaster had never sustain'd.

XV

Then, under a bonnet of tartan and blue,
Whose plumage was toss'd to and fro by the gale,
Their glances of lightning his eagle-eyes threw,
Which were met by the frowns of the sons of Kintail.

XVI

'Twas the Lord of the Isles; whom the chamberlain saw,
While a trusty long-bow on his bosom reclin'd—
Of stiff yew it was made, which few sinews could draw;
Its arrows flew straight, and as swift as the wind.

XVII

With a just aim he drew—the shaft pierced the bold Chief:
Indignant he started, nor heeding the smart,
While his clan pour'd around him, in clamorous grief,
From the wound tore away the deep-riveted dart.

XVIII

The red stream flow'd fast, and his cheek became white;
His knees, with a tremor unknown to him, shook,
And his once-piercing eyes directed his sight,
As he turn'd towards Skye the last lingering look.

XIX

Surrounded by terror, disgrace, and defeat,
From the rocks of Kintail the M'Donalds recoil'd;
No order was seen in their hasty retreat,
And their looks with dismay and confusion were wild.

XX

While thine eyes wander oft from the green plains of Slate,
In pursuit of thy lord, O M'Donald's fair dame,
Ah! little thou know'st 'tis the hour, mark'd by Fate,
To close his ambition, and tarnish his fame.

XXI

On the shore of Ardelve, far from home, is his grave,
And the news of his death swiftly fly o'er the sea—

Thy grief, O fair dame! melts the hearts of the brave,
E'en the bard of Kintail wafts his pity to thee.

XXII

And thou, Ellandonan! shall thy towers e'er again
Be insulted by any adventurous foe,
While the tale of the band, whom thy heroes have slain,
Excites in their sons an inherited glow?

XXIII

Alas! thou fair isle! my soul's darling and pride!
Too sure is the presage that tells me thy doom,
Tho' now thy proud towers all invasion deride,
And thy fate lies far hid in futurity's gloom.

XXIV

A time shall arrive, after ages are past,
When thy turrets, dismantled, in ruins shall fall,
When, alas! thro' thy chambers shall howl the sea-blast,
And the thistle shall shake his red head in thy hall.

XXV

Shall this desolation strike thy towers alone?
No, fair Ellandonan! such ruin 'twill bring,
That the whirl shall have power to unsettle the throne,
And thy fate shall be link'd with the fate of thy King.

XXVI

And great shall thy pride be, amid thy despair;
To their Chief, and their Prince, still thy sons shall be true;
The fruits of Kintail never victor shall share,
Nor its vales ever gladden an enemy's view.

XXVII

And lovely thou shalt be, even after thy wreck;
Thy battlements never shall cease to be grand;
Their brown rusty hue the green ivy shall deck,
And as long as Skooroora's high top shall they stand.

THE CURSE OF MOY

A HIGHLAND TALE

BY J. B. S. MORRITT, Esq. [of ROKEBY.—J. G. L.][1]

The Castle of Moy is the ancient residence of Mackintosh, the Chief of the Clan Chattan. It is situated among the mountains of Inverness-shire, not far from the military road that leads to Inverness. It stands in the hollow of a mountain, on the edge of a small gloomy lake, called Loch Moy, surrounded by a black wood of Scotch fir, which extends round the lake, and terminates in wild heaths, which are unbroken by any other object, as far as the eye can reach. The tale is founded on an ancient Highland tradition, that originated in a feud between the clans of Chattan and Grant. A small rocky island in Loch Moy is still shown, where stood the dungeon in which prisoners were confined, by the former Chiefs of Moy.[2]

[1] [For various particulars regarding Morritt and his correspondence with Scott, see Lockhart's *Life of Scott*. Scott wrote of him in his Diary, May 20, 1828:—'He is now one of my oldest, and I believe one of my most sincere friends;—a man unequalled in the mixture of sound good sense, high literary cultivation, and the kindest and sweetest temper that ever graced a human bosom.']

[2] It would be painful to trace further the history, real or traditional, of the Curse of Moy, to which superstition has, even of late years, ascribed a certain degree of influence.—W.S. 1831.

THE CURSE OF MOY

I

Loud in the gloomy towers of Moy,
The Chattan clan their carol raise,
And far th' ascending flame of joy
Shoots o'er the loch its trembling blaze.

II

For long within her secret bower,
In childbed lay the lady fair,
But now is come th' appointed hour,
And vassals shout, 'An heir! an heir!'

III

And round the fire, with many a tale,
The well-spiced bowl the dames prolong,
Save when the chieftains' shouts prevail,
Or war's wild chorus swells the song.

IV

Loud sound the pipes, the dancer's heel
Bounds nimbly from the floor of pine,
When in the light and mazy reel
Young maids and active soldiers join.

V

Late waned the night, the blazing brand
More feebly glimmer'd in the hall,
Less loudly shout the jovial band,
Less lively sounds the pibroch's call—

VI

When from the corner of the hearth,
A figure crept, of all the train
Most alien from a scene of mirth,
And muttering sigh'd, 'Tis vain, 'tis vain!'

VII

Soon ceased the shout, a general thrill
Seiz'd every heart; th' ill-omen'd voice
Seem'd e'en the warrior's breast to chill,
Nor dared the trembling sire rejoice.

VIII

He saw a pale and shiv'ring form,
By age and frenzy haggard made;
Her eyes, still wild with passion's storm,
Belied the snows that shroud her head.

IX

Long had she wander'd on the heath,
Or begg'd the lonely trav'ler's aid,
And gossips swear that sudden death
Still follows where her footsteps tread.

X

Her hut on Badenoch's wildest height,
Full well the mountain hunter knew,
Nor paused to take a narrower sight,
But cursed the witch, and quick withdrew.

XI

Slowly she crawl'd before the throng,
Fix'd on the Chief her haggard eyes,
Check'd with a look the minstrel's song,
'No more,' she cried, 'No more rejoice!

XII

'To you, that o'er your midnight ale,
Have listened to the tales of glee,
I come to tell a gossip's tale;
Ill-omen'd Chieftain! list to me.'

THE WITCH'S TALE

XIII

Full sixty fatal years have roll'd,
Since clamour shook these gloomy towers;
When Moy's black Chief, with Urquhart old,
Led Grant's and Chattan's mingled powers.

XIV

Like yours, their followers shouted brave,
Like yours, the minstrels answer'd loud,
Like yours, they 'gan the dance to weave,
And round and round the goblet flow'd.

XV

In solemn guise the Chieftains came,
To solemn league the Chieftains swore;
To quench the death-feud's fatal flame,
And dye the heath with blood no more.

XVI

Fair rose the morn, and Urquhart's pow'rs
To Moray's hostile border flew;
But ling'ring in the Chattan tow'rs,
The aged Chief the last withdrew.

XVII

Homewards he turn'd, some younger arm
Shall lead the war on the banks of Spey;
But sharp was the sleet, and cold the storm,
That whistled at eve in his locks so gray.

XVIII

With him went Alva's heir, who stay'd,
The Chieftain's weal or woe to share;
So Urquhart's trembling daughter pray'd,
So Alva vow'd, who loved her dear.

XIX

But drear was Badenoch's wintry waste,
And mirk the night that round them fell,
As over their heads the night-raven pass'd,
And they enter'd Glen Iral's darkling dell.

XX

The raven scream'd, and a slogan yell
Burst from Glen Iral's sable wood,
They heard in the gale a bugle swell,
They saw in the shade a man of blood.

XXI

Grimly he points, and a hundred hands
Their horses seize; in that fatal hour,
Unarm'd, defenceless, Urquhart stands,
But Alva has drawn his broad claymore.

XXII

'Stand fast, Craig Ellachie,' he cried,
As his stalwart stroke the foremost slew;
Alas! no friendly voice replied,
But the broad claymore in fragments flew.

XXIII

And sad was the heart of Alva's heir,
And he thought of Urquhart's scenes of joy,
When, instead of her smile that he loved so dear,
He met the haughty scowl of Moy.

XXIV

And far across the wintry waste,
And far from Marg'ret's bow'r of joy,
In silent haste, and in chains, they pass'd,
To groan and despair in the towers of Moy.

XXV

On yonder rock their prison stood,[1]
Deep in the dungeon's vault beneath,
The pavement still wet with the rising flood,
And heavy, and dank, is the fog they breathe.

XXVI

Three days were past—with streaming eye,
With bursting heart, and falt'ring breath,
What maiden sues at the feet of Moy,
To save their life, or to share their death?

XXVII

'Tis Marg'ret; in whose heart the tale
Had waken'd the first sad sigh of grief,
And wan and pale from Urquhart's vale,
She flew to the tow'r of the gloomy Chief.

XXVIII

Beneath his darken'd brow, the smile
Of pleas'd revenge with hatred strove,
And he thought of the hours, perchance, the while
When she slighted his threats, and scorn'd his love.

[1] See Introduction to this Ballad.

XXIX

And thus he spoke, with trait'rous voice,
'Oh! not in vain can Margaret plead;
One life I spare—be hers the choice,
And one for my clan and my kin shall bleed.

XXX

'Oh will she not a lover save,
But dash his hopes of mutual joy,
And doom the brave to the silent grave,
To ransom a sire from the sword of Moy?

XXXI

'Or will she not a father spare,
But here his last spark of life destroy,
And will she abandon his silvery hair,
And wed her love in the halls of Moy?'

XXXII

Oh have you seen the shepherd swain,
While heav'n is calm on the hills around,
And swelling in old Comri's plain,
Earth shakes, and thunders burst the ground?

XXXIII

Like him aghast did Marg'ret stand,
Wild start her eyes from her burning head,
Nor stirs her foot, nor lifts her hand;
The chastisement of Heav'n is sped.

XXXIV

Long mute she stands, when before her eyes,
From the dungeon's cave, from the gloomy lake,
In the mournful wood two forms arise,
And she of the two her choice must make.

XXXV

And wildly she sought her lover's breast,
And madly she kiss'd his clanking chain;
'Home, home,' she cried, 'be my sire releas'd,
While Alva and I in the grave remain.

XXXVI

'And my father will rest, and our name be blest,
When Moy's vile limbs shall be strew'd on the shore;
The pine-tree shall wave o'er our peaceful grave,
Till together we wake to weep no more.'

XXXVII

The tear from Urquhart's eye that stole,
As rung in his ear his daughter's cry,
Ceased on his furrow'd cheek to roll,
When he mark'd the scorn of the gloomy Moy.

XXXVIII

And stately rose his stiffen'd form,
And seem'd to throw off the load of age,
As gather'd in his eye the storm
Of feudal hate, and a chieftain's rage.

XXXIX

'False traitor! though thy greedy ear,
Hath drunk the groan of an enemy,
Yet inly rankle shame and fear,
While rapture and triumph smile on me.

XL

'And thou, my best, my sorrowing child,
Whate'er my fate, thy choice recall!
These towers, with human blood defiled,
Shall hide my corse, and atone my fall.

XLI

'Why should I live the scorn of slaves?
From me no avenger shall I see,
Where fair Lochness my castle laves,
To lead my clan to victory.

XLII

'White are my hairs, my course is run,—
To-morrow lays thy father low;
But Alva safe, with yonder sun
He shall rise in blood on the hills of snow.

XLIII

'If Alva falls, and falls for me,
A father's curse is o'er thy grave;
But safe and free, let him wend with thee,
And my dying blessing thou shalt have.'

XLIV

The maid stood aghast, and her tears fell fast,
As to the wild heath she turn'd to flee;
'Be Alva safe,' she sigh'd as she pass'd,
'To Badenoch's height let him follow me.'

XLV

She sat her down on the blasted heath,
And hollowly sounded the glen below;
She heard in the gale the groan of death,
She answer'd the groan with a shriek of woe.

XLVI

And slowly tow'rds the mountain's head,
With a sable bier four ruffians hied;
'And here,' they said, 'is thy father dead,
And thy lover's corse is cold at his side.'

XLVII

They laid the bodies on the bent,
Each in his bloody tartan roll'd;
'Now sing Craig-Ellachie's lament,
For her Chiefs are dead, and her hopes are cold.'

XLVIII

She sigh'd not, as she turn'd away,—
No tear-drop fell from her frozen eye;
But a night and a day, by their side did stay,
In stupid speechless agony.

XLIX

And another she staid, and a cairn she made,
And piled it high, with many a groan;
As it rises white, on Badenoch's height,
She mutters a prayer over every stone.

L

She pray'd that, childless and forlorn
The Chief of Moy might pine away:
That the sleepless night, and the careful morn,
Might wither his limbs in slow decay;

LI

That never the son of a Chief of Moy
Might live to protect his father's age,
Or close in peace his dying eye,
Or gather his gloomy heritage.

LII

But, still as they fall, some distant breed,
With sordid hopes, and with marble heart,
By turns to the fatal towers succeed,
Extinct by turns to the grave depart.

LIII

Then loud did she laugh, for her burning brain
The soothing showers of grief denied;
And still, when the moon is on the wane,
She seeks her hut on the mountain's side.

LIV

There sits she oft to curse the beam
That vexes her brain with keener woe;
Full well the shepherd knows her scream,
When he sinks on the moor in the drifted snow.

LV

Seven times has she left her wretched cell
To cheer her sad heart with gloomy joy,
When the fury of heaven, or the blasts of hell,
Have wither'd the hopes of the house of Moy.

LVI

And now! at your feast, an unbidden guest,
She bids you the present hour enjoy!
For the blast of death is on the heath,
And the grave yawns wide for the child of Moy!

LVII

Here ceased the tale, and with it ceased
The revels of the shuddering clan;
Despair had seized on every breast,
In every vein chill terrors ran.

LVIII

To the mountain hut is Marg'ret sped,
Yet her voice still rings in the ear of Moy;

Scarce shone the morn on the mountain's head,
When the lady wept o'er her dying boy.

LIX

And long in Moy's devoted tower
Shall Marg'ret's gloomy curse prevail;
And mothers, in the childbed hour,
Shall shudder to think on the Witch's tale.

NOTES

ON

THE CURSE OF MOY

The Chattan clan their carol raise.—St. i. l. 2.

The Chattan clan is a federal clan, consisting of the families of Macintosh, Macpherson, and some others of less consequence. The Chief is the Laird of Macintosh; the Chattan country is in the inland part of Inverness-shire.

Less lively sounds the pibroch's call.—St. v. l. 4.

The pibroch is a wild music, played by the piper at the assembling of a clan, in marches, etc. Every clan had its own particular tune, which was played most scrupulously and indefatigably on all great and signal occasions.

When Moy's black Chief, with Urquhart old.—St. xiii. l. 3.

Grant, the Laird of Urquhart, was the chief of the clan of Grant; his castle of Urquhart, now in ruins, covers one of the most beautiful of the craggy promontories that adorn Loch Ness. The delightful vale of Glen Urquhart is embosomed in the mountains behind it. The possessions of the clan in the southern part of Inverness-shire, border on those of the clan Chattan, with whom, of course, they were continually at variance.

To Moray's hostile border flew.—St. xvi. l. 2.

The Lowland district of Moray, or Elginshire, along

the banks of the Spey, being comparatively fertile and civilised, and in the immediate vicinity of the Grampians, was long exposed to the ravages and inroads of the Highland clans, who possessed the mountains on the border, and the upper part of Strathspey.

With him went Alva's heir, who stay'd, etc.
—St. xviii. l. 1.

Alva is an ancient possession of a chieftain of the family of Grant.

And they enter'd Glen Iral's darkling dell.—St. xix. l. 4.

The Iral is a small stream that rises in the Chattan country, and falls into the river of Nairn, between Moy and Loch Ness.

'Stand fast, Craig Ellachie,' he cried.—St. xxii. l. 1.

Craig Ellachie, where was the place of assembling of the clan of Grant, was also the slogan, or war-cry, of the clan.

[Craigellachie (rock of alarm) is a bold projecting rock near the left bank of the Spey, near Aviemore railway station, Inverness-shire.]

And swelling in old Comri's plain.—St. xxxii. l. 3.

The vale of Comri, in Perthshire, where earthquakes are still frequently felt, is in the higher part of Strathearn, near Crieff.

And another she staid, and a cairn she made.
—St. xlix. l. 1.

A cairn is a heap of loose stones, the usual memorial of an ancient burying-place.

THE FEAST OF SPURS

BY THE REV. JOHN MARRIOTT, A.M.[1]

In the account of Walter Scott of Harden's way of living, it is mentioned, that 'when the last Bullock was killed and devoured, it was the lady's custom to place on the table a dish, which, on being uncovered, was found to contain a pair of clean spurs; a hint to the Riders, that they must shift for their next meal.'—See Introduction, vol. i. p. 154.

The speakers in the following stanzas are Walter Scott of Harden, and his wife, Mary Scott, the Flower of Yarrow.

[1] [This gentleman was tutor to George Henry, Lord Scott, son of Charles, Earl of Dalkeith, afterwards fourth Duke of Buccleuch and sixth of Queensberry—who died young, in 1808. One of the Introductory Epistles of *Marmion* is addressed to Mr. Marriott.—J. G. L.] [Marriott, who was afterwards rector of Church Lawford, Warwickshire, was the author of various other poems in addition to those in the *Minstrelsy*, among the best known being 'Marriage is like a Devonshire Lane.' He also wrote several hymns. Many of his letters, with some verses, are included in C. K. Sharpe's *Correspondence* (1888).]

THE FEAST OF SPURS

I

'Haste, ho! my dame, what cheer the night?
I look to see your table dight,
For I hae been up since peep o' light,
Driving the dun deer merrilie.

II

'Wow! but the bonnie harts and raes
Are fleet o' foot on Ettricke braes;
My gude dogs ne'er, in a' their days,
Forfoughten[1] were sae wearilie.

III

'Frae Shaws to Rankelburn we ran
A score, that neither stint nor blan;
And now ahint the breckans[2] stan',
And laugh at a' our company.

IV

'We 've passed through monie a tangled cleugh,[3]
We 've rade fu' fast o'er haugh and heugh;[4]

[1] [*Forfoughten*, exhausted.] [2] [*Breckans*, ferns.]
[3] [*Cleugh*, pass.] [4] [*Haugh and heugh*, vale and height.]

I trust ye 've got gude cheer eneugh
To feast us a' right lustilie.'—

V

'Are ye sae keen-set, Wat? 'tis weel;
Ye winna find a dainty meal;
It 's a' o' the gude Rippon steel,
Ye maun digest it manfullie.

VI

'Nae kye are left in Harden Glen;
Ye maun be stirring wi' your men;
Gin ye soud bring me less than ten,
I winna roose[1] your braverie.'

VII

'Are ye sae modest ten to name?
Syne, an I bring na twenty hame,
I 'll freely gie ye leave to blame
Baith me, and a' my chyvalrie.

VIII

'I could hae relish'd better cheer,
After the chase o' sic-like deer;
But, trust me, rowth[2] o' Southern gear[3]
Shall deck your lard'ner speedilie.

[1] *Roose*, praise. [2] [*Rowth*, plenty.] [3] [*Gear*, stuff.]

IX

'When Stanegirthside I last came by,
A bassen'd bull allured mine eye,
Feeding amang a herd o' kye;
O gin I look'd na wistfullie!

X

'To horse! young Jock shall lead the way;
And soud the Warden tak the fray
To mar our riding, I winna say,
But he mote be in jeopardie.

XI

'The siller moon now glimmers pale;
But ere we 've cross'd fair Liddesdale,
She 'll shine as brightlie as the bale[1]
That warns the water hastilie.

XII

'O leeze me on her bonnie light!
There 's nought sae dear to Harden's sight;
Troth, gin she shone but ilka night,
Our clan might live right royallie.

XIII

'Haste, bring your nagies frae the sta',
And lightlie louping, ane and a',
Intull your saddles, scour awa',
And ranshakle[2] the Southronie.

[1] *Bale*, beacon-fire. [2] *Ranshakle*, plunder.

XIV

'Let ilka ane his knapscap[1] lace;
Let ilka ane his steil-jack brace;
And deil bless him that sall disgrace
Walter o' Harden's liverie!'

[1] *Knapscap*, helmet.

NOTES

ON

THE FEAST OF SPURS

Harden Glen.—St. vi. l. 1.

'Harden's castle was situated upon the very brink of a dark and precipitous dell, through which a scanty rivulet steals to meet the Borthwick. In the recess of this glen he is said to have kept his spoil, which served for the daily maintenance of his retainers.'—*Notes on the Lay of the Last Minstrel,* Canto IV. stanza ix.

Warns the water.—St. xi. l. 4.

This expression signified formerly the giving the alarm to the inhabitants of a district; each district taking its name from the river that flowed through it.

O leeze me, etc.—St. xii. l. 1.

The esteem in which the moon was held in the Harden family may be traced in the motto they still bear: '*Reparabit cornua Phœbe.*'

ON A VISIT PAID TO THE

RUINS OF MELROSE ABBEY

BY THE COUNTESS OF DALKEITH,[1] AND HER SON, LORD SCOTT

BY THE REV. JOHN MARRIOTT, A.M.

MELROSE ABBEY was reduced to its present ruinous state partly by the English barons in their hostile inroads, and partly by John Knox and his followers. For a reason why its abbots should be supposed to take an interest in the Buccleuch family, see the *Notes to the Lay of the Last Minstrel,* octavo edition, p. 238.

[1] [The Honourable Harriet Townsend, daughter of Thomas, first Viscount Sidney, and wife of Charles, Earl of Dalkeith, afterwards Duke of Buccleuch and Queensberry, died in 1814.—J. G. L.]

ON A VISIT PAID TO THE
RUINS OF MELROSE ABBEY

I

Abbots of Melrose, wont of yore
The dire anathema to pour
On England's hated name;
See, to appease your injured shades,
And expiate her Border raids,
She sends her fairest Dame.

II

Her fairest Dame those shrines has graced,
That once her boldest Lords defaced;
Then let your hatred cease;
The prayer of import dread revoke,
Which erst indignant fury spoke,
And pray for England's peace.

III

If, as it seems to Fancy's eye,
Your sainted spirits hover nigh,
And haunt this once-loved spot;
That Youth's fair open front behold,
His step of strength, his visage bold,
And hail a genuine Scott.

IV

Yet think that England claims a part
In the rich blood that warms his heart,
And let your hatred cease;
The prayer of import dire revoke,
Which erst indignant fury spoke,
And pray for England's peace.

V

Pray, that no proud insulting foe
May ever lay her temples low,
Or violate her fanes;
No moody fanatic deface
The works of wondrous art, that grace
Antiquity's remains.

ARCHIE ARMSTRONG'S AITH

THE hero of this ballad was a native of Eskdale, and contributed not a little towards the raising his clan to that pre-eminence which it long maintained amongst the Border thieves, and which none indeed but the Elliots could dispute. He lived at the Stubholm, immediately below the junction of the Wauchope and the Eske; and there distinguished himself so much by zeal and assiduity in his professional duties, that at length he found it expedient to emigrate, his neighbours not having learned from Sir John Falstaff, 'that it is no sin for a man to labour in his vocation.' He afterwards became a celebrated jester in the English court. In more modern times he might have found a court in which his virtues would have entitled him to a higher station. He was dismissed in disgrace in the year 1637, for his insolent wit, of which the following may serve as a specimen. One day, when Archbishop Laud was just about to say grace before dinner, Archie begged permission of the King to perform that office in his stead; and having received it, said, 'All *praise* to God, and little *Laud* to the deil.' The exploit detailed in this ballad has been preserved, with many others of the same kind, by tradition, and is at this time current in Eskdale. [The most complete account of Archie Armstrong, who was court-jester both under James I. and Charles I., is that by Mr. Sidney Lee in the *Dictionary of National Biography*.]

ARCHIE ARMSTRONG'S AITH

BY THE REV. JOHN MARRIOTT, A.M.

I

As Archie pass'd the Brockwood leys,
He cursed the blinkan moon,
For shouts were borne upo' the breeze
Frae a' the hills aboon.

II

A herd had mark'd his lingering pace,
That e'enin near the fauld,
And warn'd his fellows to the chase,
For he kenn'd him stout and bald.

III

A light shone frae Gilnockie tower;
He thought, as he ran past,—
'O Johnie ance was stiff in stour,[1]
But hangit at the last!'

IV

His load was heavy, and the way,
Was rough, and ill to find;
But ere he reach'd the Stubholm brae,
His faes were far behind.

[1] [*Stour*, press of battle, combat.]

V

He clamb the brae, and frae his brow
The draps fell fast and free;
And when he heard a loud halloo,
A waefu' man was he.

VI

O'er his left shouther, towards the muir,
An anxious ee he cast;
And oh! whan he stepp'd o'er the door,
His wife she look'd aghast.

VII

'Ah wherefore, Archie, wad ye slight
Ilk word o' timely warning?
I trow ye will be ta'en the night,
And hangit i' the morning.'—

VIII

'Now haud your tongue, ye prating wife,
And help me as ye dow;[1]
I wad be laith to lose my life
For ae poor silly yowe.'—

IX

They stript awa' the skin aff hand,
Wi' a' the woo' aboon;
There 's ne'er a flesher[2] i' the land
Had done it half sae soon.

[1] [*Dow*, can.]

[2] *A Flesher*, a butcher.

X

They took the *haggis-bag* and heart,
The heart but and the liver;
Alake, that siccan a noble part
Should win intull the river!

XI

But Archie he has ta'en them a',
And wrapt them i' the skin;
And he has thrown them o'er the wa',
And sicht whan they fell in.

XII

The cradle stans by the ingle[1] toom,[2]
The bairn wi' auntie stays;
They clapt the carcase in its room,
And smoor'd it wi' the claes.

XIII

And down sat Archie daintilie,
And rocked it wi' his hand;
Siccan a rough nourice as he
Was not in a' the land.

XIV

And saftlie he began to croon,[3]
'Hush, hushabye, my dear.'—
He hadna sang to sic a tune,
I trow, for mony a year.

[1] *Ingle*, fire. [2] *Toom*, empty.
[3] *Croon*, to hum over a song.

XV

Now frae the hills they cam in haste,
A' rinning out o' breath.—
'Ah, Archie, we ha' got ye fast,
And ye maun die the death!

XVI

'Aft ha' ye thinn'd our master's herds,
And elsewhere cast the blame;
Now ye may spare your wilie words,
For we have traced ye hame.'—

XVII

'Your sheep for warlds I wad na take;
Deil ha' me if I 'm leein';
But haud your tongues for mercie's sake,
The bairn 's just at the deein'.

XVIII

'If e'er I did sae fause a feat,
As thin my neebor's faulds,
May I be doom'd the flesh to eat
This vera cradle halds!

XIX

'But gin ye reck na what I swear,
Go search the biggin[1] thorow,
And if ye find ae trotter there,
Then hang me up the morrow.'—

[1] *Biggin*, building.

XX

They thought to find the stolen gear,
  They search'd baith but and ben;
But a' was clean, and a' was clear,
  And naething could they ken.

XXI

And what to think they couldna tell,
  They glowr'd at ane anither;—
'Sure, Patie, 'twas the deil himsel
  That ye saw rinning hither.

XXII

'Or aiblins Maggie 's ta'en the yowe,
  And thus beguil'd your ee.'—
'Hey, Robbie, man, and like enowe,
  For I hae nae rowan-tree.'—

XXIII

Awa' they went wi' muckle haste,
  Convinced 'twas Maggie Brown;
And Maggie, ere eight days were past,
  Got mair nor ae new gown.

XXIV

Then Archie turn'd him on his heel,
  And gamesomelie did say—
'I didna think that half sae weel
  The nourice I could play.'

XXV

And Archie didna break his aith,
He ate the cradled sheep;
I trow he wasna very laith
Siccan a vow to keep.

XXVI

And aft sinsyne to England's King
The story he has told;
And aye when he 'gan rock and sing,
Charlie his sides wad hold.

NOTE

ON

ARCHIE ARMSTRONG'S AITH

Or aiblins Maggie's ta'en the yowe.—St. xxii. l. 1.

There is no district wherein witches seem to have maintained a more extensive, or more recent influence than in Eskdale. It is not long since the system of bribery, alluded to in the next stanza, was carried on in that part of the country. The rowan-tree, or mountain-ash is well known to be a sure preservative against the power of witchcraft.

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